

SouthBendTribune.com
Discover what's in it for you



Home News Sports Business Opinion Entertainment ourLives Columnists Obituaries Jobs Classifieds Today's Ads Store

E-Mail Story | Print Story | Newsletter | Buy Photos

April 13, 2007 6:59AM

Holy homage, Batman!

IUSB film festival mocks, celebrates sci-fi and fantasy

WEEKEND

JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO
 Tribune Staff Writer

There's a scene in Rob Reiner's classic coming-of-age film "Stand by Me" where Vern (Jerry O'Connell) and Teddy (Corey Feldman) are debating who would win a fight: Superman or Mighty Mouse?

"Superman is a real guy," Teddy says. "There's no way a cartoon could beat up a real guy."

Makes perfect sense if you're 10 years old or Indianapolis filmmaker Christopher Allen.



The cast of Christopher Allen's "Star Trek vs. Batman," a three-episode serialized parody of the two 1960s television shows, pose on the bridge of the Enterprise. Allen's film is one the works that will be screened this weekend at Indiana University South Bend's sixth annual Independent Video and Filmmakers Festival.

Photo provided

- View additional photos for this story...

So when the 35-year-old set out to combine a few television icons into a short film, he decided the original "Star" Trek crew should battle the live action television personas of

On screen

The 6th annual Independent Video and Filmmakers Festival begins at 7 p. m. today with additional screenings at 9 a.m., 1 p.m., 4:15 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday at Wiekamp Hall, Rooms 1001 and 1135, Indiana University South Bend, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., South Bend. Tickets are \$15 for a weekend pass, \$10 for all day Saturday or \$5 per time slot. For more information, call (574) 315-8044 or visit www.ivff.net.

"Batman & Robin."

"I was watching 'Batman' with my friend (filmmaker) Mike (Yheulon), and we noticed the acting skills of Adam West and William Shatner were very similar," Allen says by telephone from Indianapolis. "That just turned into an off-the-cuff joke: What if we had Captain Kirk square off against Batman?"

The result, "Star Trek vs. Batman," a three-episode serialized parody, will be screened Saturday as part of the sixth annual Independent Video and Filmmakers Festival at Indiana University South Bend.

"You never know what you are going to get," festival founder and filmmaker Tim Richardson says. "Every year the quality of films gets better and better. A lot of it is the technology. We're seeing a lot more green screen work and people working in digital. This was the first year that every submission we received came on DVD."

The two-day noncompetitive festival, which begins tonight, features workshops on screenwriting, producing, special effects and directing, plus screenings of nearly 40 movies -- ranging from two minutes to 100 minutes -- from local, regional and national filmmakers.

"The point of this festival is to get films on the screen," Richardson says. "We try to keep our films to people who are working independently and on a small budget."

People such as Allen and his Rasco Films crew.

Shot last spring, Allen's three-part serial pays homage to one of the more famous episodes of "Star Trek," while remarkably replicating both sound and visual effects right down to the Batmobile.

The story begins when the Enterprise mysteriously travels back to 1967 and winds up in orbit around Earth.

When Capt. James T. Kirk (Joshua Ramsey) and Mr. Spock (Leo Barczewski) beam down to the surface to investigate, they are captured by The Joker (Gavin Rulon) and Catwoman (Victoria Floro).

While Batman (Scott Ganyo) and Robin (Daniel Boughton) are looking into why a spaceship is in orbit above Gotham, The Joker steals the brains of Kirk and Spock, reducing them to zombies with one thought: Kill Batman and Robin.

"Phasers, fights and hot women, that's what made these shows great," Allen says.

Allen was careful to incorporate techniques reminiscent of the cult classics -- from animated openings to details on the bridge of the Enterprise to slanted camera angles.

Fans have taken notice. Last month, it was named Best Fan Film at RadCon in Seattle.

Merging two iconic series, however, hasn't pleased everyone.

"About one out of every 100 people will say, 'Spock would never do that!' " Allen says, "or, 'It's not geeky enough.' "

The same, however, can't be said about the bulk of entries in this year's IVFF.

"There has definitely been more of a sci-fi and fantasy feel this year than in years past," Richardson says. "We have, of course, 'Star Trek vs. Batman,' my film, 'Dork of the Rings,' a few Harry Potter films."

There's also "Pirates of the Maple City" by Steve Ruminski and Lukas Snyder. As part of

IVFF workshops

The following workshops will be held at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday.

- **Screenwriting:** Tom Joachim ("WKRP in Cincinnati," "Charlie's Angels") examines the step-by-step process of developing and structuring a full-length feature film movie.
- **Producing Micro-Cinema:** Tino Marquez Jr. of Bunk Films in Indianapolis shares how to put together a successful indie production.
- **Special Effects In Michiana:** How do you create movie magic right in your backyard? Ian Strandberg, Andy Swisher and Todd Davis examine special effects in low budget films.
- **Director's Panel:** Meet and ask questions of some of the experienced directors who have films in the festival.

Related Stories

- [IVFF film capsules](#)

Recent Screentime Stories:

- [Couric says CBS news' viewers weren't ready for format change](#)
- [Director, cast explore wizardry's dark turn in latest 'Potter' movie](#)

[More Entertainment Stories...](#)

a school film project, Ruminski, who made his festival debut in 2006 with "Jesus II," and Snyder took on "Pirates of the Caribbean."

"It's really a combination mockumentary and parody," the 18-year-old LaPorte High School student says. "We decided to dumb it down. So instead of being actual pirates, they just think they are."

Also returning to the festival lineup is 25-year-old Brian Amyot from Queens, N.Y. Amyot, who attended IVFF last year with four films, including audience favorite "Teenage Superhero Pregnancy Scare," has three projects screening in 2007.

Along with "I Want to Be a Jedi," and "Merry Christmas ... I Got You Herpes," is "We Need Girlfriends," the first three webisodes (<http://weneedgirlfriends.tv>) of the series that follows the misadventures of three young men in the postcollege dating world.

As in years past, the 2007 edition of IVFF includes several familiar films that have already screened locally.

For example, "Welcome to Snyderville," "Yiayia & The Evil Eye," "666-7734," "Flipped" and "Loyal Daughters" were all part of the University of Notre Dame's annual Student Film Festival.

Richardson's "Lord of the Rings" parody, "The Dork of the Rings," and Devi Snively's dark vampire short "Raven Gets a Life" are also among this year's strong IVFF field.

"Sometimes when you're evaluating films by committee, you have a tendency to want to fast-forward," Richardson says, "but I didn't get that feeling this year. I think that says something."

Staff Writer Jeremy D. Bonfiglio:
jbonfiglio@sbtinfo.com
(574) 261-3650

 E-Mail Story |  Print Story |  Newsletter |  Buy Photos

ADVERTISERS



FEATURED SITES



[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [ourLives](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Discussion Forums](#)

[Jobs](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Search](#) | [Personals](#) | [Lottery](#) | [Today's Ads](#) | [Photo Galleries](#) | **[Weather](#)**

[Vows Listings](#); [Engagement, Wedding and Anniversary announcement forms](#)

Flagship Custom Publications: **IN Michiana**

Special Sections: [Sports Fest](#) | [Nifty 50 Club](#) | [Newspapers in Education](#) | [Irish Sports Report](#)

SouthBendTribune.com: [Privacy Policy](#) | [Jobs at the Tribune](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertise](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)

[XML](#)

Our Privacy Policy and Direct Notice To Parents

Contact the southbendtribune.com Web staff.

News coverage and editorial content provided by the South Bend Tribune unless otherwise specified.

Copyright © 1994-2007 South Bend Tribune