

# When We Think of Binghamton, All We Can Say Is "The Horror, The Horror"

## Local Filmmaker Premieres First Feature-Length Horror Movie

(see photos on page 4)

It's official: Broome County now has a horror-movie production company. The feature-length film *Demon Messenger* premiered to an enthusiastic response at the Art Mission Theater on Friday, April 13th, then ran through April 28th. The story centers around a family and how they handle the issue of fracking when it comes to their town. Little did they know, however, that the fracking process would release more than just noxious chemicals into the drinking water. The demon messenger sprouts from the land and blood begins to spill.

To get to this place, producer/writer/editor D.A. Bush decided after years to finally turn his dreams into reality. An expert in video communications, Bush has always been a horror fan. But something happened that told him now was the time to act. "I was at a

change point in my life," he told the *Police Gazette*. "My son is at NYU, my daughter is graduating high school this year. And then last year I lost a very close friend who died of cancer."

Bush has been a professional videographer for many years, but he always considered himself a filmmaker. "My friend and I talked about the film I didn't make," Bush says, referring to a feature-length documentary he started but never finished. "And he said 'So when are you going to make a film? How long do you think you have? How long did you think I had?' He was 60 years old. Had a great job, great retirement. Now he's not here with us anymore. You get to a point in life where you need to feed your soul. I'd rather do this because this is what I am. And it becomes more important than 'How's my 401k doing?'"

The result is *Demon Messenger*. For inspiration, Bush cites *Night of the Living Dead*. "What's lost today is what Romero did with social commentary in his movies," he says. "So my movie is not really about fracking; it's about how fracking affects the people around it." And it's not all about people getting slaughtered by a monster either. "The people and story are important," Bush says. "And then it takes a wrong turn."

With the premier under his belt, *Demon Messenger's* promotion has just begun. So Bush and his wife Juley will first be shopping the film around to regional theaters since the subject is a "regional hot button right now." Then they will be looking to get the movie entered into various film festivals around the country. The cost to produce and promote *Demon Messenger* will come to slightly under \$20,000 all together, financed by Bush, Juley, and co-producer Joe DeMuro.

Bush feels pretty good about becoming part of the Binghamton-area cultural fabric. But does he see the area's artistic energies blooming in general? "It's like the car trying to start," he says. "It goes 'wer er er er' and fires a little bit, but then it doesn't seem to go. I think everyone's trying. There's a certain core of people who try to be positive and motivate and innovate stuff in the local downtown. But no home run yet; it's just chugging along. People don't do it for the pursuit of fame or fortune; it's the pursuit of doing their art for the sake of the art."

Even with the continuing work promoting *Demon Messenger*, Bush is already working on the treatment for his next film. It will be set in a haunted house and asks the question "What if ghost hunters went into a house and found everything they ever wanted to find? And then see if they really wanted to find it." Bush would like to cast the movie in August and shoot it in September when the leaves are starting to turn. "But hopefully I'll have to postpone it because I'll be at some film festival for *Demon Messenger*."

### Women Win Football Opener Binghamton Tiger Cats Crush Massachusetts

(see photo on page 4)

The region's only all-female, full-tackle football team defeated the Massachusetts Chaos 30 to 0 in the season opener on April 28th at their home field, the Endless Mountains Sports Complex in Towanda, PA.

A few of the Tiger Cats spoke with the *Police Gazette* before the game. "We feel great about the season," said inside linebacker Mary Canfield. "We have a strong team and everyone is itching to go."

This is the fourth season for the team, but their first at the facility in Towanda. Their home field had been Binghamton Alumni Stadium at East Middle School. But the Cats tell us Towanda offered to let them use their field for half what Binghamton was charging. So even with the extra cost in gas, the team is saving quite a bit. Now they just hope that fans will follow.

The team finished last season with a 6-4 record. They're in the Womens Spring Football League, and they'll play regular games through the beginning of July. Division and conference championships take place later in the month. Then, if all goes well, the Tiger Cats will be at the WSFL national championship game to be played on August 11th.

## LEONARD MELFI AND THE MISTREATMENT OF A LEGEND Part 7: The Pine Box

In Part 6 (April), investigative journalists in New York City helped John Melfi locate his dead brother, American-theatre legend Leonard Melfi. This month, John follows through in his determination to see his brother one last time.

By John Melfi with William A. Mays  
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Entering the funeral home we were met by the funeral director. He asked me to join him in his office. Once there he again tried to discourage me from viewing the opening of the coffin, telling me it would be a sight that "you won't ever forget." Looking back now I can say he was right about that. I told him he couldn't change my mind; I had to do this. His response was, "Okay, follow me."

He led me to the elevator and we went down to the basement. I remember getting off the elevator and it was about 30 degrees colder down there. He gave me a mask to put on and some gloves and gown. We then went into a room where I saw an unopened pine box sitting on a large table. The first thing I noticed was the name "Melfi" scribbled on the side of the box. It had been in the ground for just three months but already had cracks in the wood. On the corners you could see right through the cracks. These boxes are put in the ground as is. No vault, not air tight. Just a hastily built pine box. The funeral director said to me, "If you're ready, I'll open it." I told him I was ready.

He removed the top of the pine box. A stained, dirty-looking sheet was now between me and the viewing of my brother. The director then removed the sheet, revealing a totally nude male body in the coffin. I turned away to adjust the mask as the odor of a decaying body is very strong. When I turned back to view the body I was able to identify it as my brother Leonard Melfi. Although it was one of the most horrible sights I'd ever seen, I had to spend some time looking at him for the last time. I noticed there were a lot of incisions all over his body. After the upcoming autopsy I would find out what those incisions were from. It's awful how they just take nude bodies, stuff them into a pine box, throw a sheet over the top of them, and then nail the lid on. It's just not the way to have somebody put to rest for eternity. It's just not right.

I left the room, got on the elevator, and went up to the main floor. I was kind of in shock. Without saying anything I walked right by my son and daughter, who were waiting in a family room, and went out the door. I just had to be by myself for a few minutes. I started walking the streets of New York and thought about the times I'd done that with Leonard. He never drove and he just loved walking the streets of New York. He loved the city and always said, "This is the greatest city in the world." Eventually I made my way back to the funeral home where I talked with my family, and then we all left to head home.

The next day I called Dr. Boden and made arrangements for an autopsy to be done at the Campbell Funeral Home in New York. He told me that after it was done he would let me know his findings. In the meantime, I contacted the DeMarco Funeral Home in Port Dickinson, NY. The DeMarcos have been the funeral home my family has used for as long as I can remember. I told Albert DeMarco the situation and that I wanted to have Leonard's body brought back to have a proper funeral service and be buried in the family plot in Calvary Cemetery. Albert told me not to worry, that he would secure and do all the paperwork necessary to have my brother brought back. He would bring Leonard back for that proper funeral.

About a week later Dr. Boden called and told me that after conducting the autopsy he found Leonard should never have died from what he went into the hospital for. He said if administered a simple procedure at the time he was brought there Leonard would have lived. Then I asked him about all the incisions I'd seen. Dr. Boden said Leonard's body had been subjected to multiple incisions that had nothing to do with his condition. It looked as if he'd been used for some kind of experiment or possibly some training purpose. Dr. Boden suggested that some investigative work be done on that. He also said that Leonard could be released and brought back home to Binghamton. I was again shocked, upset and very angry at what I'd just been told. I wanted to get to the truth of what had happened. But I thought, "First let's get Leonard home and give him that proper funeral service and burial."