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Nights of Heaven

By: Jessica Emili, TIMEOFF

Nickelodeon Nights kicks off with 'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen.'

Sara Scully had a goal: she wanted to excite the people of Lambertville through film.

Much to her surprise, the writer/director/producer was met with enthusiastic support from the community, and offers to help Ms. Scully start a local film series came pouring in. Niece Lumber built a movie screen at no charge, the Lambertville Recreation Committee is providing a viewing space and the Friends of the Lambertville Library purchased a projector. Ms. Scully's vision will come to life with the start of Nickelodeon Nights, a free outdoor film series beginning July 20.

"I was inspired by other cities that have similar series. I thought if Doylestown has a film series, why not Lambertville?" says Ms. Scully. After moving to the area from Manhattan a year ago, Ms. Scully did research on starting film events and began networking with others. Jennifer Sirak, the head of children's services at the Lambertville Free Public Library, encouraged her to suggest the idea to the Friends of the Library. Ms. Scully pitched her idea to the Friends, who were not only enthusiastic about it, but were also looking to buy a film projector for the library.

"I really wanted this series to serve the community. I was really surprised how excited people in Lambertville were. It wasn't just me, I've had a lot of good help. This project has been a wonderful example of people coming onboard for free and donating their time and resources to a cause," says Ms. Scully.

While Nickelodeon Nights turned into a community undertaking, Ms. Scully's professional background has been invaluable in getting the series on its feet. Prior to working in television production, Ms. Scully was a fundraiser and project manager for nonprofit organizations.

"My background in political organizing has taught me how to fundraise and get donations. It's all about getting people to come together and make a project work," says Ms. Scully.

For the past five years, Ms. Scully has been directing and producing documentary and educational media. She directed *You Again: A Human Cloning Love Story*, a feature documentary produced in development with HBO, and co-directed and produced *Public Weapon*, a short documentary on police brutality that was featured at the 2001 Black Panther Film Festival, the Hip-Hop Film Festival and ArtSpeaks!

She recently wrapped up work on Scholastic's *Real 180*, a documentary series for students in grades K-12. The series takes topics students are learning about, like the Civil Rights movement, and breaks them down into fast-cut, music-driven short films that "help them build visual models for what they're reading about," Ms. Scully says.

Ms. Scully's personal filmic preferences influenced Nickelodeon Nights' lineup of classic and current documentaries and feature films. "I really love verite documentaries," says Ms. Scully. She cites Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA* and Terrence Malick's narrative film *Days of Heaven* as personal favorites.

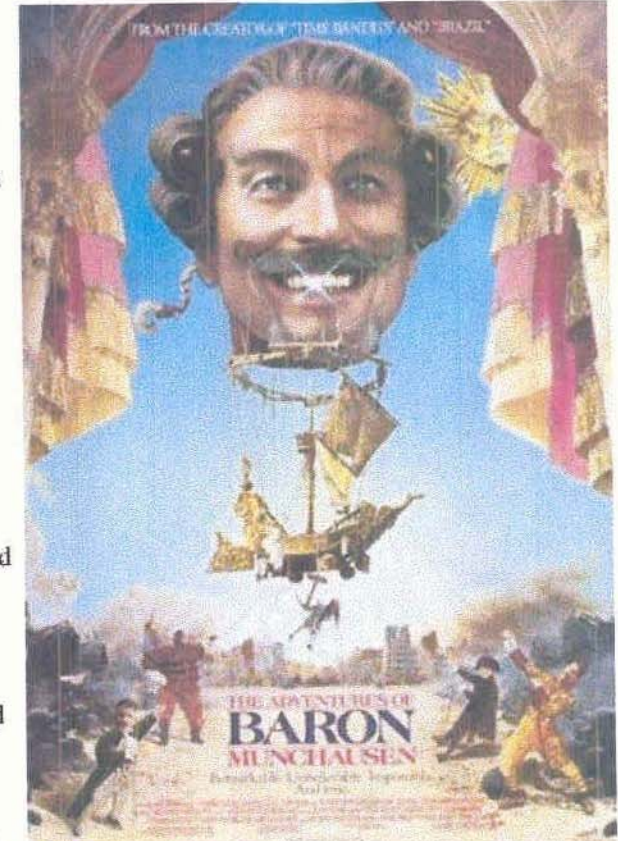
The series will begin with *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* July 20. Films will be shown the third Thursday evening in August and September as well. Future selections are yet to be announced, but Ms. Scully says August's screening will be an independent documentary and September's will be a more current feature film.

Efforts are underway to secure an indoor locale and turn the series into a year-round affair. "The long-range dream is to have a screening space where different art groups can share a space," says Ms. Scully.

Ms. Scully's ideas for the future include weeklong series of films centered on specific themes, and a possible Halloween event in October.

"If it comes off without a hitch, I'd like to expand it," she says. "I wanted to start small and not over-commit, but it would be wonderful to hold the series more often."

Nickelodeon Nights will be held the third Thursday evening July-Sept. at Mary Sheridan Park, York Street, Lambertville. Movies will begin at 8 p.m.; audience members are encouraged to arrive by 7:30 p.m. and bring blankets or lawn chairs. Snacks will be available for purchase, but viewers are welcome to bring their own. For information, call the Lambertville Free Public Library at (609) 397-0275. On the Web: www.njstatelib.org/lpl



A poster for Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.