



For media inquiries, contact:
Kathi Sharpe-Ross / The Sharpe Alliance
T: 310 271-2323 E: kathi@sharpealliance.com

FYI - FILM YOUR ISSUE

www.filmyourissue.com

**NATIONAL "ISSUE FILM" COMPETITION
TARGETING YOUNG AMERICANS 18 TO 26
INCLUDING 7 MILLION COLLEGE STUDENTS ON 1200 CAMPUSES**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

MSN SPACES, MSNBC.COM, USA TODAY, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, mtvU AND TOSHIBA

**AND IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, A.S.C.A.P.,
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES AND USC CENTER FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**



**VIP JURY INCLUDES WALTER CRONKITE, GEORGE CLOONEY, PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN,
SENATOR BARACK OBAMA, LOS ANGELES MAYOR ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA,
BRIAN WILLIAMS, AMY GROSS, ANDERSON COOPER, GILLIAN SORENSEN**

WALTER CRONKITE AND GEORGE CLOONEY

**HAVE EACH PENNED OPEN LETTERS
URGING ENGAGEMENT IN THE PRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME**

**FYI FILM YOUR ISSUE IS SOLICITING 30-TO-60 SECOND "ISSUE FILMS"
TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG AMERICANS TO ADD THEIR VOICE
TO PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON CURRENT ISSUES, VIA FILM**

(Los Angeles, CA) – FYI - FILM YOUR ISSUE (www.filmyourissue.com), an unprecedented "issue film" competition inviting young Americans 18 to 26, including 7 million college and university students on 1200 campuses nationally, to add their voice to the public dialogue on contemporary issues via 30-to-60 second films, launched January 24, 2006 at the *Sundance Film Festival*.

The idealism and scope of the competition, now in its second year, has brought together such major partners as *Microsoft*, *MSN Spaces*, *USA TODAY*, *mtvU*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Walt Disney Company*, *Paramount Pictures*, *Motorola* and *Toshiba*; national and international organizations like *The United Nations* and *U.N. Millennium Campaign*, *The Humane Society of the United States*, *A.S.C.A.P.* and *USC Center for Public Diplomacy*; national and international leaders like Walter Cronkite, George Clooney, Senator Barack Obama, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Gillian Sorensen, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Brian Williams, Anderson Cooper, Amy Gross and Shashi Tharoor, as well as the heads of major studios, publishing, broadcasting and music industries.

The competition will be promoted to the 440 million monthly users of *MSN* and the 104 million users of *MSN SPACES*, as well as to readers of *USA TODAY*, the largest U.S. circulation newspaper, and *Entertainment Weekly*, the largest-circulation entertainment consumer magazine.

Young Americans 18 to 26 will be invited to create 30-to-60 second films -- live action or animated -- on any issue, as a way to empower young adults in being engaged, involved citizens and giving them a voice. Students may also choose from six suggested sub-categories, which will offer additional presentation platforms to winners: Global issues/ UN Millennium Development Goals; Animal Welfare; Arts as a Global Diplomat and Cultural Bridge; Music-driven, featuring solo, band, or music-video styled film in which music presents the issue; and Integration of Film and New Media, in which an issue will be expressed via the creation of an issue-based webpage on *MSN Spaces* which merges film and internet-based technologies. Submission deadline is May 1, 2006.

George Clooney and Walter Cronkite have each written an open letter to young Americans, currently being distributed across the U.S. on college campuses. The candid letters urge young Americans to engage in the pressing social issues of our times, and add their voices to the public dialogue. (Copies of letters available upon request).

MSN Spaces, which sponsored the launch of *FYI - FILM YOUR ISSUE* at the *Sundance Film Festival 2006*, will sponsor the top finalists to attend the *Sundance Film Festival 2007* and present their entries. Two top finalists will each be offered a paid internship at *Paramount Pictures* and *The Walt Disney Company*. The top finalist in each of the six categories will also be broadcast on *mtvU*, *mtvU Über* at *mtvU.com*, *MSN Video* and *MSNBC.com*, and be invited guests, along with their faculty advisor, at the closing reception at *The United Nations* headquarters in New York City. The top finalists in each category will also receive a *Motorola RAZR V3* mobile phone and *Toshiba Qosmio* notebook, and their entries showcased at the *Maui Film Festival* in June 2006. The *Vail Film Festival* in April 2006 will offer the first-look of 2006 entries.

"It's very exciting that such an explicitly idealistic outreach can take wings and mushroom so quickly, among media leaders, academia, the Hollywood community, major corporations, government," says HeathCliff Rothman, who founded *FYI - Film Your Issue* in 2004. "I think that change in our society has to come from new paradigms. Visuals and film are the language of this generation. We want to engage young Americans in contemporary issues, invite them to tell us what matters to them, empower them to recognize that their voice is welcome and necessary in the public dialogue, in this case via film."

MSN Spaces (<http://spaces.msn.com>) is where the *FYI* filmmakers will also create personal profile pages, share their current and past projects and the progress of their "issue film," and where the public and filmmakers will be invited to blog on the issues they've seen. Finalists will be tallied by a combination of public and VIP Jury votes.

The semi-finalist films will be presented on *MSN Video* (<http://video.msn.com/>), and the public will be able to vote on the semi-finalists by visiting *MSNBC.com*.

Top finalists in the category of *Arts as Global Diplomat and Cultural Bridge* and *Global Issues/ UN Millennium Development Goals* will be screened at a panel at UN Headquarters, co-hosted by *USA TODAY* and *USC Center for Public Diplomacy*. Top finalists in the category of *Animal Welfare* will be posted on the website of *The Humane Society of the United States*. Top finalists in the category of *Integration of Film and New Media*, in partnership with *MSN Spaces*, will receive an additional prize.

FYI - FILM YOUR ISSUE academic partners include the leading organizations of higher education: *The Association of American Colleges and Universities*, *The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (The American Democracy Project)*, *The American Association of University Professors*, *Campus Compact* and *Imagining America*.

Round 1 finalists focused on a judicial injustice case in Illinois, media accountability on the coverage of Iraq, widespread poverty, gay marriage, and education budget cuts, as follows: "The Innocence," on Judicial Injustice, *Illinois State University*; "Animated IRAQ" on Media Accountability in Iraq, *Boise State University*; "A Way of Life," on Poverty, *University of Central Florida*; "Equal Rights," on Gay Marriage, *Castleton State College*; "The Slasher," on Education Budget Cuts, *University of Wisconsin - Stout*.

FYI - FILM YOUR ISSUE ROSTER

FOUNDER

HeathCliff Rothman - Journalist/ Social Entrepreneur

DISTINGUISHED JURIST

Walter Cronkite - News Anchor/ Journalist/ Author

VIP JURY

Jonathan Alter - *Newsweek / NBC*

Brad Anderson - Vice Chairman and CEO, *Best Buy Co., Inc*

Kurt Andersen - Novelist / Journalist

Ben Bradlee - VP at Large, *The Washington Post*

George Clooney - Actor/ Director/ Producer

Lyor Cohen - Chairman and CEO, *U.S. Recorded Music, Warner Music Group*

Dick Cook - Chairman, *The Walt Disney Company*

Anderson Cooper - *CNN/ Anderson Cooper 360*

Mark Cuban - *HDNet / Landmark Theatres / Magnolia Pictures / Dallas Mavericks*

Amy Gross - Editor in Chief, *O Oprah Magazine*

Philip Seymour Hoffman -- Actor

Nicholas Kristof - Political Op-ed Columnist, *The New York Times*

Robert Lynch - President and CEO, *Americans for the Arts*

Ron Meyer -- *Universal Studios* President and COO

Claudia Mitchell-Kernan - Vice Chancellor, *UCLA*

Craig Moon - President and Publisher, *USA TODAY*

Barack Obama- Senator, Illinois (D)

Wayne Pacelle - President and CEO, *The Humane Society of the United States*

Mercedes Paz - *The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities*

Richard Pena - Chairman, *New York Film Festival Selection Committee*

Tom Rothman - Chairman, *Fox Filmed Entertainment*

Gillian Sorensen - Former Ass't Secretary-General, *United Nations*; Senior Advisor, *UN Foundation*

Shashi Tharoor - Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, *UN*

Van Toffler - President, *MTV Networks Music / Logo/ Films Group*

Antonio Villaraigosa - Mayor, City of Los Angeles

Todd Wagner - *HDNet Films / Landmark Theatres / 2929 Productions / Todd Wagner Foundation*

Brian Williams - Anchor and Managing Editor, *NBC Nightly News*

CHIEF ADJUDICATOR, NEW MEDIA PLATFORMS

Jodi Ropert – General Manager, *MSN / Windows Live Worldwide*

ADVISORY THINKTANK

Michael Barlow - *Paramount Classics*

Harold Bronson- Co-founder, *Rhino Entertainment*

Kimberly Shlain Brooks - President, *Lightray Productions*

Dana Brunetti - President, *Trigger Street Productions*

Ken Dozier - Exec. Dir., *Western Research Application Center Viterbi School of Engineering USC*

Joshua Fouts - Executive Director, *USC Center for Public Diplomacy*

Stephen Nemeth - President, *Rhino Films*

Michael Oppenheimer - Professor, Geosciences and International Affairs, *Princeton University*

Sara Risher - Producer, *New Line Cinema*

Barry Rivers - Founder and Director, *Maui Film Festival*

Eric Roth - Executive VP, Co-Head of Business & Legal Affairs, *The Weinstein Company*

Robert Rosen - Dean, *UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television*

Bruce Royer - President, *Royer Studios*

Michelle Satter - Director, Feature Film Program at *The Sundance Institute*

Kathi Sharpe-Ross - President, *The Sharpe Alliance*

John Solomon - Producer, *Walt Disney Television Animation Shorts*

John Tarnoff - Senior Executive, *Dreamworks Animation SKG*

Marc Von Arx - *Creative Artists Agency* (CAA)

Daphna Ziman - Founder and Chairperson, *Children Uniting Nations*