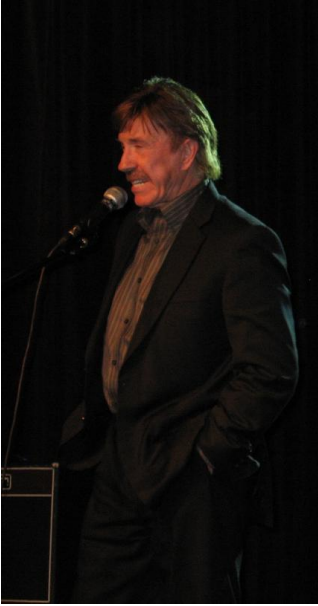


ActionFest Blows up Western NC

Written by Adam Hicks
Monday, 19 April 2010 10:57



3:54 p.m. - Stuntmen were jumping off cherry pickers, lighting themselves on fire, riding around on rocket packs, and skydiving in Asheville over the weekend. Oh yeah, and a guy named Chuck Norris happened to stop by to check it all out.

Thursday through Sunday the Carolina Cinemas in Asheville played host to ActionFest, which was the first-ever film festival devoted to action films.

The film festival not only featured around 50 screenings of some of the greatest action films ever made, but it also included two free stunt shows in the cinema's parking lot and discussion panels with stuntmen, directors, and actors.

Bill Banowsky, who owns the Carolina Cinemas, and Hollywood stuntman, director, and producer, Aaron Norris, helped spearhead the festival.

A few of the celebrities who were involved with ActionFest were Paul Weston (who has been involved in coordinating stunts in over 130 films including Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark, Star Wars: Return of the Jedi, several James Bond films, and the Superman trilogy), Jeff Habberstad (involved in stunts for Vanilla Sky, Spiderman, Live Free or Die Hard, There Will be Blood, Jarhead, The Happening, and many others. Habberstad also won an Emmy Award for his stunt work on the television show "Alias"), Sheree J. Wilson (who played Alex Cahill on Walker, Texas Ranger), Judson Mills (who played Francis Gage on Walker, Texas Ranger), and the stunt doubles of celebrities like Sylvester Stallone, Jet Li, and Chuck Norris.

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Action superstar Chuck Norris stopped by ActionFest on Sunday. High Country Radio was able to catch up with Norris for an exclusive interview and see what he thought of the festival.

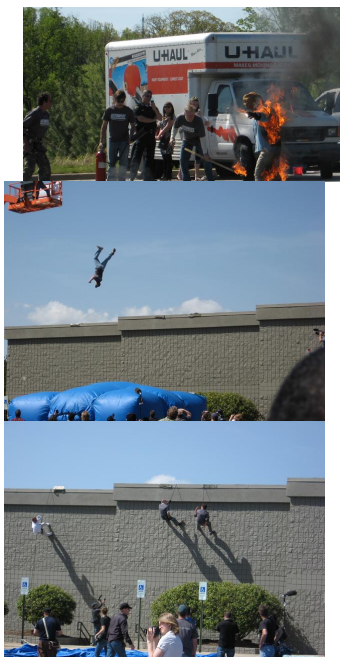
Norris said ActionFest was put on to honor the stuntmen who are really the backbone of the action film genre. He explained, "The unsung heroes, the stuntmen and women who make the action stars look good on the screen never get the credit for it. So, I was so excited that Bill Banowsky, Dennis Burman and my brother, Aaron, decided to start the first ActionFest."

Chuck Norris was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for an Action Hero at the ActionFest Awards on Sunday night. After giving a quick speech, he declined the award and presented it to his brother, Aaron Norris.

All proceeds from ActionFest went to fund Chuck Norris' Kickstart Kids Foundation, which gives inner city middle schoolers a martial arts outlet rather than getting involved with drugs and gangs.

Norris said, "We've been doing it 17years and we've graduated 60,000 kids over the past 17 years. Most of these kids have gone on to college and become successful in their own right. One of these kids got a full scholarship to M.I.T."

ActionFest officials said they will hold another festival next year in Asheville.



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