



Press Release

BBLIFF ANNOUNCES JOHN GRANDI WINNER OF 2009 COMMUNITY APPRECIATION AWARD

Big Bear Lake, CA - August 14, 2009: The Big Bear Lake International Film Festival (BBLIFF) is pleased to announce that the 2009 recipient of the Community Appreciation Award is John Grandi. Film Festival Board President Ty Warren says “John has been so active and visual in the community that to many he is thought of as ‘Mr. Big Bear.’ John is always at the forefront when it comes to donating his time and talent for the betterment of Big Bear Valley. The Big Bear Lake International Film Festival is delighted to be presenting the Community Appreciation Award to Mr. John Grandi.”

The 10th Annual Big Bear Lake International Film Festival and Screenwriting Competition is scheduled for the weekend of September 18-20, 2009. During the BBLIFF Opening Night Gala Party and Awards Presentations, the spotlight will be on John Grandi. Friends can acknowledge John’s achievements by placing tribute ads in the program schedule brochure. For more information on the Festival or to purchase tribute ads for John, contact a Festival representative at 909-866-3433 or www.bigbearlakefilmfestival.com

The Community Appreciation Award is given to an individual who has contributed greatly to the well being of the Big Bear Community. This is the 10th Annual Film Festival held in Big Bear but only the 4th time that a community member has received recognition. In 2000 Actress Shirley Jones was the first community advocate honored with the prestigious award. For unknown reasons it did not re-surface until 2007 when Channel 6 TV Host Ron Seymour was nominated in a move that the Film Festival Board unanimously agreed was long overdue. Last year (2008) Dick Kun was the announced winner for his many philanthropic endeavors.

The 2009 honoree, John Grandi, is one of Big Bear’s living legends – sharing his life stories on stage as benefits for such worthy organizations as the Hospital Foundation and the Library, acting in CATS productions and as a Rotarian often emceeding the Eagles of Excellence evening. John uses his popular human interest column in the Grizzly Newspaper “Stay Tuned” to promote the people, projects and happening events in the Big Bear Valley.

The Community Appreciation Award is not limited to individuals who are in “show biz.” However, often “show biz” folks such as Grandi enjoy sharing their background and blessings within the community. John, who with his usual good humor, claims to have “flunked retirement” keeps busy writing, acting and in general lending a helping hand wherever needed. And in all these endeavors he continues to work to make Big Bear a better place for all because as he claims “I’ve been in the ‘people’ business my entire life.”

For John this means spending his time doing things that benefit others is important. He’s acted in small scale productions to benefit both the Hospital Foundation and the Library. A popular favorite “An Evening with John Grandi” done as a charity performance for the Library was so well received that a encore was produced at the Performing Arts Center as a Hospital Foundation

fund raiser. John is a “people person” who has earned the respect of the community and has formed many enduring friendships. It is not surprising that his circle of friends come together to support John’s favorite causes – often sharing the stage with him.

Grandi is an actor, musician and humanitarian – and a columnist for the Grizzly Newspaper. He finds it hard to believe that the Grizzly recently presented him with a ten-year award as he explains “It all started eleven years ago when I emceed a show that a very special and talented lady, Shirley Jones did as a special benefit concert for the Healthcare District Foundation. I was shocked when I discovered that no mention was made in the local paper that an entertainer of Shirley Jones’ caliber was performing on the Hill. I contacted the then editor, John Emig, to ask why there was no coverage of such a premier event. I told him I would be retiring in a year and would like to write a column covering local happenings. I got the job and the rest is history. Shirley and I are still close friends and I’m still writing my column every other week.”

Grandi’s column is interesting and informative, filled with wisdom and witticism – more importantly it promotes the people and businesses of this Valley. No entertainer, whether aspiring or seasoned, is left unsung or worthy endeavor unmentioned. John’s column showcases the people, places and events that make Big Bear a special place.

Grandi, who admits to being 84 years young, has lived a long and colorful life. He credits his family with giving him an appreciation of music and the arts. He remembers his Dad’s love of the Opera but says that it was his Mother who saved his life by encouraging him to play the trumpet. John reminisces “As a gung-ho 17-year-old I enlisted in the Army Air Cadets during WWII” and he continued with a chuckle, “I didn’t have the required year of college needed to advance so I was assigned to laundry detail – what a job – I spent the days impregnating clothes – It was the original chemical warfare.”

Grandi’s career path changed when he saw a sign recruiting a bugler, auditioned and was re-assigned to the band in Birmingham. He was never sent overseas and spent the war playing in the Army Ground Forces Band. After the war, he blew (played the trumpet) with many of the popular Big Bands, including the Russ Carlyle Band at the Avalon Ballroom and the Les Brown Band. John recalls “Those were the days of the Big Bands but sadly, it’s a new era and the famed sounds of the Big Bands have faded – or moved on to Branson, Missouri.”

Grandi is a show business veteran. Back in the day he traveled with the national company of “Mr. Roberts,” appeared with a repertory company in “My Three Angels with a very young Jessica Tandy and appeared in “Solid Gold Cadillac” with Judy Holliday. He says that his favorite role was in “Our Town” with Burgess Meredith.

Grandi’s life has revolved around show business, but like many entertainers, he has held other jobs between gigs, including the automobile trade and marketing and advertising. It was while working in Los Angeles that he met and married the “Leading Lady” of his life, Julie. After thirty-eight years, John still says “Julie saved my life and now I’m making the most of it.”

John says he is honored to be the 2009 recipient of the Big Bear Lake International Film Festival Community Appreciation Award. Friends of John Grandi are invited to join in a celebration of John’s many contributions to the Valley on Friday, September 18, 2009. Tickets, priced at \$35, to the Gala Party and awards presentations are available for purchase at the Performing Arts Center Box Office, 39707 Big Bear Blvd., by phone 909-866-4970 or online at the BBLFF website bigbearlakefilmfestival.com. For more information on the Big Bear Lake Film Festival and Screenwriting Competition check out our website (listed above) or call 909-866-3433.