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*Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:
www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos
Program companion website: www.pbs.org/livermore*



**INDEPENDENT LENS's "LIVERMORE"
AN AMUSING EXPLORATION OF
SMALL-TOWN AMERICA**

*—Part History, Part Mystery, Mostly Comedy—
an Artfully Crafted Documentary about
One Nuclear Suburb's Colorful Past—*

**Film by Rachel Raney and David Murray
Airs Nationally on "Independent Lens"
ITVS's Acclaimed Series on PBS
November 25, 2003 at 10 P.M.
(check local listings)**

"Part Mayberry, part 'Twin Peaks,' with a dash of Chernobyl. You'd have to be a sourpuss cynic not to leave the theater thinking you've spent an hour with some unforgettable and endearing characters—even if Fellini would reject them as a tad too odd."

—SAM McMANIS, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

(San Francisco, CA)—A few years ago, filmmakers Rachel Raney and David Murray wanted to make a film on suburban sprawl. They were interested in how small communities become McTowns, losing their sense of place and becoming Anywhere, USA. Then they read about the town of Livermore, California, which had "misplaced" a time capsule buried decades earlier. The filmmakers found this very funny, that a town with a national nuclear laboratory could lose a simple metal canister full of artifacts. "But it also seemed like a powerful if subtle metaphor of a town losing its identity," said Raney. They went to Livermore to investigate.

But instead of a film about sprawl, Raney and Murray ended up creating a truly original film that falls somewhere between documentary and fairy tale, mystery and comedy. **LIVERMORE** is a portrait of a once-bucolic suburb continually threatened by growth and change, and a handful of eccentric old-timers who struggle to hold on to what makes their town special.



As the filmmakers train their dreamlike camera on the town's populace, a treasure trove of memories comes tumbling out of the past. The year was 1969, and Livermore—an eclectic mix of ranchers, nuclear physicists and newly arrived suburbanites—was in the midst of celebrating its 100th anniversary. Civic leaders buried a Centennial time capsule that inexplicably goes missing almost 30 years later.

But that's just the beginning of this surreal and amusing trip down Livermore's memory lane. As the film digs deeper into collective memories, a peculiar set of stories emerges: a supernatural light bulb, a mysterious cursed totem pole and construction of an ominous nuclear lab are all unearthed. Not to mention a photography book that scandalized the town. Bill Owens, former staff photographer for the local newspaper, took pictures of his friends and neighbors and turned them into the art-world sensation, *Suburbia*. His revealing photographs, and the controversy that swirled around them, are featured in the film.

Stranger still is how all roads lead back to the missing time capsule. The search effort reaches a fever pitch—shovels and pick axes are replaced by nuclear strength radar and space age probes. Just as the town begins to despair, the old-timers race to the rescue. While they might not discover the missing artifact, these locals inadvertently unravel Livermore's mysterious and almost forgotten past.

In an age of megastores, suburban sprawl and coast-to-coast homogenization, **LIVERMORE** is a testament to the power of preservation and a celebration of old-fashioned civic pride.



Additional information and/or downloadable photographs from **LIVERMORE** are available at www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos.

The program's interactive companion website at www.pbs.org/livermore features detailed information about the film, including an interview with the filmmaker, as well as links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a "talkback" section for viewers to share their ideas with one another, preview clips of the film and much more.

LIVERMORE Credits

DIRECTED BY

PRODUCED BY

CAMERA AND EDITING BY

MUSIC BY

SOUND EDIT AND MIX

ONLINE EDITORS

ADDITIONAL CAMERA BY

David Murray & Rachel Raney

Rachel Raney

David Murray

Rama Kolesnikow

Peter Steinbach

Jesse Spencer, Bob Johns, Ed Rudolph, Zac Pineda

Dick Jones

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

RACHEL RANEY (Producer and Director) works on both independent nonfiction films and documentaries for public television. In addition to **LIVERMORE**, she also produced and directed *Toll Collector*, a series of eight short films about these often maligned transportation workers. Raney has numerous broadcast credits as well. She recently co-produced two PBS documentaries: *Presumed Guilty*, which aired nationally on PBS in Fall 2002, and *The Celebrity and The City*, which aired in October 2001 on KQED. Previously, Raney was a production manager and associate producer for the Center for Investigative Reporting, Inc., whose award-winning documentaries air regularly on the PBS series *FRONTLINE*. She has worked on several *FRONTLINE* documentaries including *The Best Campaign Money Can Buy*, *The Heartbeat Of America* and *Public Lands/Private Profits*. She is currently working as the coordinating producer for a new series on public television, *Frontline World*.

DAVID MURRAY (Director, Cinematographer, Editor) is a photographer, filmmaker and musician, as well as the art director at Video Arts, a San Francisco post-production facility. He has created the opening sequences and graphics for several documentaries and television programs including the ITVS series *Digital Divide*, KQED's *Intensity TV*, Emiko Omori's *Rabbit in the Moon* and ZDTV's *The Site*. Murray's independent documentary films include collaborations with Raney and Kolesnikow—**LIVERMORE** and *Toll Collector*—as well as several in-progress portraits of San Franciscan eccentrics. His work can be seen at Spectacular Optical.

RAMA KOLESNIKOW (Music) composes and produces music for films and commercials. After earning a degree in music composition from the University of Michigan in 1991, he worked as a composer and sound designer at Earwax Productions until 1995. He then worked independently until launching Pera Studios, a creative sound and music shop, in 2001. He is also a founding member, keyboardist and musical director of Super Diamond, a nationally touring rock band.

FEATURED INTERVIEWS

Barry Schrader

Bill Owens

Adam Fortunate Eagle Nordwall

Tilli Calhoun

Olga and Edward Peiffer

Don Miller

Dan Lee

TOWN HISTORIAN

PHOTOGRAPHER WHOSE BOOK *SUBURBIA* SCANDALIZED THE TOWN

CHIPPEWA ARTIST

PAINTER

CENTENNIAL FILMMAKERS

RETIRED LIVERMORE SCIENTIST

FORMER DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, WHO INSTRUCTED THE TOWN STAFF TO BURY THE TIME CAPSULE UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

Lynn Owens

RETIRED LIVERMORE FIRE FIGHTER AND ‘SPOKESMAN’ FOR
THE LIGHT BULB

Tom Bramell

DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, FIRE STATION # 6

Pat Brosnan

FORMER LIVERMORE BARBER

Cathie Brown

MAYOR OF LIVERMORE

Justin Isabel & Roy Robustelli

PUBLIC WORKS STAFF

Bob Howard

OWNER OF PROSPECTORS CLAIM

ABOUT *INDEPENDENT LENS*

Independent Lens is a weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin in *The New Yorker* to write “Watching *Independent Lens* ... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don’t always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn’t even know you wanted.” Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independent-lens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.



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