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Horror film festival could spawn a sequel: Weekend event called a success

By Mick Burke

RACINE - This weekend's local independent film festival, "It Came From Lake Michigan," appears to be headed for a sequel.

The festival attracted horror, science fiction and fantasy films with a heavy emphasis on the horror. The 45 films shown at Memorial Hall here and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside attracted at least 400 people, said organizer Wayne Clingman of Racine.

He said all indications solidly support the idea of rerunning the festival.

"Definitely, it will be an annual event," Clingman said Sunday after the three-day festival had ended. "It will be bigger and it will be better."

One of the event's main goals was to attract fledgling filmmakers to Racine with the idea that they may come back and film in the area someday.

"We encouraged people to see Downtown Racine," Clingman said. "Because a large part of this was to bring these filmmakers to Racine to say, 'Look at what we have here.'"

Horror films comprised at least 95 percent of the films entered, he estimated, "Because horror films are easy to do. A lot of people use that as their entry to film."

Those movies were joined by one or two fantasy films and a few sci-fi movies.

"It was interesting the amount of young people who came through who were interested in doing something in film," Clingman said.

Based partly on audience reactions, judges handed out the following awards: Best of Show and Best Horror Film - "Bait," from Autumn Night Studio of Green Bay.

Best Female Filmmaker - Devi, maker of "Teen-age Bikini Vampire."

Best Science Fiction Film - "Diabolical Tales, Part 1," by Cosmic Control Productions of Phoenix.

Up-and-Coming Actor - William Zenobia.

Best Up-and-Coming Filmmaker - Kelly Maccott.

A special treat, Clingman said, was the film "Beer Drinkers in Space: The Documentary." It chronicled a small group of Disney employees who made "Beer Drinkers in Space" in the 1980s.

"Now that everyone's 20 years older," he said, they look back at making the original film in a "hilarious" documentary.

Clingman already has a potential name picked out for next year's festival: "It Came From Lake Michigan Returns."