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WHO'S WHO IN CHICAGO PRODUCTION

Lisa Wilson's WIF committee hosts the most career-advancing events of any trade organization



Lisa Wilson

WHO SHE IS: As Women in Film/Chicago's essential Career Development chair, Lisa Wilson and her committee plan and organize some 30 events each year— undoubtedly the largest number of on-going functions annually hosted by any local trade organization.

WHAT SHE DOES: Wilson and her five-person committee develop and hold professional level educational programs all designed to enhance careers in the film industry.

Build-A-Skill, Roundtable Series and Backlot Series are the monthly educational events, augmented with early breakfast meetings, big networking parties and select screenings.

Coming up is a Build-A-Skill session Aug. 29 on 'New Media and the Future of Production,' and the Sept. 8 Roundtable discussion is on "Entering the Chicago Production Community."

Wilson's day job at is assistant to senior sound engineer Michael Coyle at Chicago Recording Company's satellite studio at 55 W. Wacker.

PROS: "The networking. Getting close to people in the organization and getting educated as to who does what in the industry."

CONS: "Balancing working for a living and the time spent on volunteer work. We all put a lot of time into WIF activities."

CURRENTLY WORKING ON: A first-time-ever seminar on unions and guilds that's never been offered before. A panel of representatives from Studio Mechanics, Camera and Teamsters locals, IBEW and Screen Actors Guild will explain their functions and qualifications for membership.

HEADACHES: 'It can be really hard confirming speakers because everyone has busy schedules and it's sometimes hard for them to commit to being someplace at a certain time.' The board of seven and an advisory board give Wilson's committee a lot of help in finding just the right speakers.

BACKSTORY: Wilson, a native of south suburban Steger started at CRC as an intern 18 months ago after earning a BA in interactive media from Columbia College. She got into sound by helping other students on the post side of their films.

Feeling she wanted "to be more connected to the community," Wilson joined WIF a year ago. Six months later she joined the board and became Career Development chair.

"Our committee's purpose is to give something back to our members," she says, meaningful events that will enhance their career paths.

ON THE SIDE: She just wrapped a 20-minute short called "Plain View," based the true story of about a female restaurant manager who gets talked into a strip search over the telephone by a person impersonating a police officer.

Ironically, she says, "The film was accepted by the Bluegrass Film Festival in Louisville where the incident occurred, and the following day, the trial for the lawsuit commences."

KEY TO SUCCESS: 'Not being afraid to leave my comfort zone. I try new things like going to meetings when I don't even know anyone - that's when opportunities appear.'

WHAT CHICAGO COULD USE: 'Finding a way of keeping post work here and creating more jobs. A lot of it has to do with distribution, which is in L.A. That's where the money is, so that's where the jobs are.'