

# North County News

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# Peekskill supports new middle school

## Voters comfortably approve \$59.8M bond

by Henry Naccari

Some supporters of the Peekskill School District's \$59.8 million capital improvement bond to construct a new middle school had tears of joy streaming down their faces last Thursday evening.

Others whooped it up and roared each time positive results from one of six voting districts rolled into the Administration Center on Elm Street.

No matter the reaction, one fact was certain among bond advocates when the final tally of 1,067 to 692 was announced: The children of Peekskill were the real winners.

"I'm elated tonight for the students of Peekskill," said Board of Education President Tuesday Paige McDonald a few moments after wiping tears from her eyes. "They (the students) deserve this middle school."

The bond's passage means the district will proceed with its plan to build a new \$48 million middle school behind the existing 75-year-old Rinebold Street facility.



Jubilant supporters applaud the bond's passage last week.

# PV filmmaker revels in the dark side of life

by Rita J. King

While many in Putnam Valley profess the need for affordable housing, they ought to be careful what they wish for in case one resident's evil dream comes to life.

Independent horror movie writer and director Glen Baisley, 32, of Light and Dark Productions, has always been attracted to the polar forces inherent in the human psyche, and the main character of his newest film *The Tenement* is named Rellik. Sharpshooters who studied at the Redrum school will recognize immediately that Rellik is "killer" backwards.

Luckily, no developers are considering suing Putnam Valley for the right to build a tenement because Baisley's vision paints a grim image of what life along the dark corridors might be like.

"There is something inherently evil within *The Tenement*," said Baisley, a 1989 Lakeland High School graduate. "It does something strange to the people who live there. Imagine a building that can change who you are and the way your mind thinks. Ethan lives in this building and is obsessed by horror films. His destiny lies in the shadows of a black rose - the symbol of decayed innocence. This begins the series of murderous events among the tenants of this mysterious building. Four lives are changed forever by the evil that dwells within."

Mute Sarah, played by Carol DiMarsico, wants only a simple life with her radio as a companion, but her neighbor has planned a different course for her life. In another apartment, Jimmy Wayne Garrick, played by Mike Lane, becomes convinced he has turned into a werewolf, and the serial killer Taxi Driver encounters a surprise from one of his victims. As the evil forces of the building converge on the tenants, can they loosen its grip before they all succumb to darkness? The serenity of comfort is removed from home when you sign a lease at *The Tenement*, Baisley said.

Lane said working on the film was a healthy dose of horror mixed with comedy. He recalled driving at 2 a.m. to arrive at a shoot for a "strip club scene." Two actresses were no-shows, some of the extras had been tipping the cups and everybody was operating on general lack of sleep. Later that day he had an audition in New York City and feared falling asleep at the wheel while driving, but luckily no such horror unfolded in real life.

"Experiences like that will make me appreciate success more if and when I achieve it. The finished scene came out great and showed no evidence of the hardships that everyone there had experienced," Lane said. "Working with Glen is great because he is so determined to make his movies successful. I know that he does his absolute best to promote his movies as well as the actors and crew involved. Many people have moved on to successful careers in the entertainment industry based on work that they have done for Glen."

Gene Mazza, a makeup artist who worked on *The Tenement*, has always been looking for a chance to "do his own Jason." *Friday the 13th's* killer has nothing on Rellik, who, in studded black leather and face mask, resembles the kind of guy you might expect to find lurking in the alleys of Manhattan's Meat Packing District.

"I like to approach from a very extreme angle," Mazza said. "But also to keep it as realistic as possible. This was my chance to create my very own leather-clad barbarian."



Filmmaker Glen Baisley poses with Rellik, the killer he created for his independent film, *The Tenement*.

Brian Spears, 30, of Somers, handled the "gore" factor for the film. His grandmother, a Putnam Valley resident, saw an advertisement in the *Pennysaver* looking for actors for a locally shot independent film.

"Glen and I had crossed paths at horror conventions. Glen was selling his first feature, *Fear of the Dark*, and I was selling hand-crafted rotting skulls, bloody body parts, and severed heads. But we never formally were introduced," Spears recalled. "We met towards the end of 2001 to discuss the gruesome gross-out deaths he had planned."

Baisley "pitched a good story," Spears said.

"I was quickly sold and excited to help out. Previously I had worked on a lot of low budget flicks but Glen seemed different. I took the job knowing there would not be much if any money involved, but what Glen lacked in funds or "studio" equipment he made up with his heart and a drive to make a movie. I've been fortunate to work on several films recently, with modest budgets, but none of the directors had the passion Glen had and I admire him for that."

Spears said he would pull out severed limbs, skulls and corpse props, "just for the atmosphere," and that he liked Baisley's willingness to allow him the freedom to express himself in this manner.

The entire project was shot for \$10,000, a scarier prospect than having Rellik bopping around the set in studded leather. The exteriors are local, recognizable spots in Peekskill, Somers and Putnam Valley. The scenes were shot mainly guerrilla-style, though Baisley admits it isn't easy to sprinkle a landscape with corpses and gore without catching a few passersby off guard.

Baisley said some of the stories in *The Tenement* came from ideas he had as far back as eighth grade, when his taste for fake blood first developed. These days, people tend to snub horror films because real life has gotten so gruesome and some say visual violence, however fictitious, doesn't help.

But Baisley noted that watching a film isn't going to turn someone into a killer.

"People would mistakenly walk into the set," Baisley said. "Their reactions would be priceless. It's like a car wreck or something."

In 2001, Baisley won Best Storytelling in a Feature Narrative at the Putnam County Film Festival for *Fear of the Dark*, and this year he won Best Feature Horror Film at the same festival.

Brain Damage Films will be releasing *The Tenement* on video and DVD April 13. Baisley will be doing a movie signing at Joey's Movies in Cortlandt on April 17 from noon to 4 p.m.

"I write movies to scare and entertain but with some social consciousness," Baisley said. "I feel that too many people are in a state of denial about the horrors that go on around us everyday. How many people sleep with their doors unlocked with the 'it can't happen to me' mentality? Hopefully my movies will make people take proactive steps to help prevent such atrocities."



A scene from the movie *The Tenement*