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Five-time Emmy award winner Karyl Evans recently signed a contract to serve as executive producer of the film *Testimonies of a Quiet American Town*, a joint venture between Hebron resident Matt Troy and the Hebron Historical Society. Evans' hiring was funded through a \$10,000 grant the Historical Society secured through the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism.

Peters Film Nets Emmy-Winning Producer

by Sarah McCoy

What started out as a small film about Cesar and Lewis Peters has turned into a large-scale professional documentary, complete with an Emmy award-winning executive producer, thanks to a grant secured by the Hebron Historical Society.

The artistic eye of Hebron resident and current film school student Matt Troy, combined with the historical knowledge and resources of the Historical Society, looks to be an exciting pairing, as they prepare for filming next spring.

In 2006, Troy approached Historical Society President Donna McCalla with an idea of making a film about the two former Hebron residents who, in 1774, were captured and almost sold into slavery only to be saved by their townspeople. The Historical Society jumped on board and filming was scheduled for this past May.

As Troy prepared for filming, McCalla began hunting for grants. "As is common in the film industry, we rely on our budget to set the schedule," Troy said.

Realizing they had an opportunity to secure additional funding for the production, Troy and the Historical Society agreed to postpone filming in hopes of raising money to improve the quality of the endeavor.

Earlier this spring, McCalla received word that the production had received a \$10,000 Special Initiatives Grant (SIG) from the Connecti-

cut Commission on Culture and Tourism. That money allowed the production team to hire Karyl Evans as executive producer of the film as well as a certified historian for the film.

Evans is a five-time Emmy award winner and has worked on a number of productions dealing with slavery in New England including the Steven Spielberg film *Amistad*. McCalla first met Evans as they both worked on a Yale University documentary on the Peters story in 2006.

"We're thrilled to have this opportunity to work with Karyl," McCalla said. "Her vast knowledge and experience in producing films on slavery and abolitionism has already helped us significantly in framing the final project."

The Historical Society has yet to hire the certified historian for the project.

In addition to receiving the \$10,000 grant, the Historical Society was also invited by the Commission on Culture and Tourism to apply for a second SIG to cover the remaining costs of the film, \$46,362. That would bring the total budget for the project to \$62,474.

McCalla expects to hear whether the production will receive the grant in November. She wouldn't go so far as saying she's expecting the grant, but McCalla is optimistic about their chances.

The film is entitled *Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town*. It will be 26 minutes in length, to coincide with a half-hour time slot on such television channels as Connecticut Public Television (CPTV).

In addition to submitting the film to festivals and television stations, McCalla reported that the production crew is also looking to hire a certified education professional. "We hope to be able to submit to the state Department of Education not just a film but curriculum material to go along with the film so teachers can tell the story of Cesar and Lewis in a way that fits into their certified curriculum," she said.

The filming, according to Troy, will focus mainly on the courtroom scenes where Cesar and Lewis' future hangs in the balance. Their abduction will be shown through character flashbacks. "It's about the drama in decisions and the actions that decide their fates," Troy said.

There will be five or six principal cast members, with 30-50 extras. Troy anticipates holding open casting calls in Hebron over the winter.

"It has, and always will be, a story about Hebron, for Hebron and with Hebron," he said.