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***THE TRAIL OF PAINTED PONIES* WINS BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM
AND BEST FILM BY A WOMAN DIRECTOR AT THE
FIRST ANNUAL WHITE SANDS FILM FESTIVAL**

ALAMOGORDO, NM –*The Trail of Painted Ponies* was named Best Documentary Film, and Santa Fe Filmmaker Director/Writer Elizabeth Gaylynn Baker took home the Alamogordo’s Women’s Historical Committee Grand Prize of **Best Film by a Woman Director** for *The Trail of Painted Ponies* at this year’s First Annual White Sands Film Festival, which was held in Alamogordo, New Mexico February 17 – 20th, 2005.

“The White Sands Film Festival has simply outdone themselves. They presented a festival with precision and grace that was extremely successful,” stated Baker. “I want to personally thank Joan Griggs and the members of the community of Alamogordo who worked so hard to honor the films and the filmmakers. I was elated to win and especially touched that the Alamogordo’s Women’s Historical Committee would extend such extraordinary support to a woman filmmaker.”

The Trail of Painted Ponies, narrated by Ali MacGraw is 55 minutes long, and features authentic interviews with many of New Mexico’s finest artists. The “painted ponies” are life-sized horse statues painted by these New Mexican artists; the film takes the viewer not only into the lives of the artists, but also into the lives of the recipients of the funds generated by the sale of the “painted ponies” in auctions across New Mexico. The film received a standing ovation at its debut at the Santa Fe Film Festival and was soon after shown on National Public Television in New York State. Baker’s first documentary, an 8 minute short entitled *When Buffalo Roam*, won Best Social Documentary Short at the New York International Independent Film & Video Festival in 1999.

Actor/Director Rick Schroder made a personal appearance with his directorial debut feature film *Black Cloud*, which will have its theatrical release in the spring, and David Gibbens presented a trailer of *Fourteen Days in America*, a documentary of people from all walks of life that was filmed in Alamogordo, New York, San Francisco and other cities throughout the country. The White Sands Film Festival, designed as a family event, showed competitive independent films, offered several seminars designed to creatively and financially assist filmmakers, and presented a bevy of special films, receptions and special events.

“We are proud that in our first year we were able to send the entries to New York to be judged by Sony Classics. They picked our winners,” said Joan Griggs, Otero County Film Office Liaison. “And then the entire town turned out to welcome our winning filmmakers.”

For pictures of this years festival, visit the White Sands Film Festival website www.whitesandsfilmfestival.com
