

EAST LA INTERCHANGE

A Film by Betsy Kalin

"The history of Boyle Heights is an example of the promise — and peril — of American progress. In her great new documentary *East LA Interchange* filmmaker Betsy Kalin whisks us through this fascinating past." — Amy Nicholson, *LA Weekly*



TRT: 57 minutes / 2015 / USA

Featuring narration by **Danny Trejo (*Machete*)** and interviews with **will.i.am (The Black Eyed Peas)**, **Father Greg Boyle (Homeboy Industries)**, and **Josefina López (*Real Women Have Curves*)**. Original song by **Raul Pacheco (Ozomatli)**.

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TRAILER featuring **will.i.am**: <https://youtu.be/9Z2FYuLOZgg>

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LOGLINE

East LA Interchange shows how Boyle Heights survived the construction of the largest freeway system in North America that threatened to destroy their proud, immigrant community. The film explores the shifting face of community in the United States today and argues why it should matter to us all.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

East LA Interchange follows the evolution of working-class, immigrant Boyle Heights from multiethnic to predominately Latino and a center of Mexican-American culture in the U.S. The film shows how the neighborhood survived the construction of the largest freeway system in North America that threatened to destroy their proud community. The documentary explores how the freeways – a symbol of Los Angeles ingrained in America’s popular imagination – impact Boyle Heights’ residents: literally, as an environmental hazard and structural blockade and figuratively, as a conversational interchange about why the future of their beloved community should matter to us all.

East LA Interchange tells the story of how one neighborhood found its political voice in its fight against the freeways. Though there are different issues today, these activist residents are still organizing and speaking out for their rights as a working-class, immigrant, community of color. The film asks if Boyle Heights as we know it will survive the next round of challenges from environmental pollution, industrialization, development and gentrification. **East LA Interchange** provides a compelling look at what the future of America can be if communities like Boyle Heights work together to secure our nation’s pledge of providing justice for all.

The film features narration by **Danny Trejo (*Machete*)** and interviews with **will.i.am (*The Black Eyed Peas*)**, **Father Greg Boyle (*Homeboy Industries*)**, and **Josefina López (*Real Women Have Curves*)** as well as an original song by **Raul Pacheco (*Ozomatli*)**.



LONG SYNOPSIS

East LA Interchange tells the story of working-class, immigrant Boyle Heights, the oldest neighborhood in East Los Angeles. Targeted by government policies, real estate laws, and California planners, this quintessential immigrant neighborhood survived racially restrictive housing covenants, Japanese-American Internment, Federal redlining policies, lack of political representation, and the building of the largest and busiest freeway interchange system in North America, the East L.A. Interchange. The documentary explores how the freeways – a symbol of Los Angeles ingrained in America’s popular imagination – impact Boyle Heights’ residents: literally, as an environmental hazard and structural blockade, and figuratively, as a conversational interchange about why the future of their beloved community should matter to us all.

Boyle Heights was once one of the most diverse, multicultural areas in the United States. Founded in 1875, Boyle Heights by the 1920s had evolved into a multiracial neighborhood far more diverse than any U. S. city at the time with Asians, Latinos, African-Americans, Russian Molokans, and the largest settlement of Jews west of Chicago living and working together side by side. A 1954 article in *Fortnight* declared, “Few districts in America are as ethnically dynamic, politically tolerant, and community-proud...” *East LA Interchange* charts Boyle Heights’ evolution from multiethnic to predominately Latino as the neighborhood becomes a nucleus of Mexican-American history and culture in the U.S.

East LA Interchange presents a complex picture of the many issues Boyle Heights’ residents have faced through the years such as access to education, gang violence, discriminatory immigration policies, environmental pollution and gentrification. A *New York Times* article on the neighborhood coined the term “gentefication” referring to young Latinos returning to Boyle Heights to invest in local businesses: “(Gentefication) has provided a jolt of energy and a transfusion of money, but it has also created friction with working-class residents here. And tensions over just whom this neighborhood belongs to are a clear sign that Latinos have come of age in Los Angeles.” As the U.S.’s Latino American population changes, these conversations are becoming more essential in pointing to the wave of the future.

The question of whether an evolving Boyle Heights can preserve its unique culture and history along with a desire to create new opportunities and a healthier environment for its residents is one that many communities throughout the country are currently facing. In *East LA Interchange*, NYU historian John Kuo Wei Tchen says, “Places like Boyle Heights are literally on the cutting edge of what this country is becoming.” *East LA Interchange* takes a thought-provoking approach that leaves viewers with questions about the possibilities of community in the U.S. today: why do we build community, can we make a difference together, and can we protect this cornerstone of American culture in the face of tremendous obstacles?



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Betsy Kalin – Executive Producer / Director

Betsy Kalin received a BA in Women's Studies from Columbia University, a Directing MFA from the University of Miami, and runs *Itchy Bee Productions* – a production and distribution company specializing in high-quality films that entertain, educate and inspire. Her feature-length documentary, *Hearts Cracked Open*, premiered at the Frameline Film Festival and has won several awards. Her film, *Roof*, premiered at New Directors/New Films and is a part of the *Short Shorts* compilation. She produced and wrote the documentary *Before Homosexuals* with John Scagliotti, the Emmy award-winning executive producer of PBS's *In the Life*, and she also researched and directed *Of Revolutionaries and Pioneers* for WGBY/WGBH. In 2010 she made *Chained!*, a short documentary that screened in festivals around the world, and in 2013 produced the award-winning film *Click*.

Eric Waterman – Executive Producer

Eric Waterman is the co-founder of Bluewater Media Group, CEO of NAS International, and co-founder of 40 Love Investments. As a photographer, Eric has exhibited his work at the Paul Kopeikin Gallery, Froden Gallery and the Buckland Gallery as well as being part of many private collections and published in several magazines including *Vietnam Airlines' Heritage Magazine*. As a native Los Angeleno, Eric is proud that his family lived in Boyle Heights in the 1930s and 1940s.

Vanessa Luna Bishop – Producer

Vanessa Luna Bishop was born and raised in City Terrace and Boyle Heights. She is an entrepreneur, writer and academic of the arts. She received her M.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing at California State University Northridge, her B.A. at Occidental College in English and Comparative Literature with a minor in Visual Arts, and graduated in Theatre at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. At age 7, Vanessa had the privilege of presenting Anthony Quinn with a flower in honor of renaming the Belvedere Library to the Anthony Quinn Library, site of his childhood home in Boyle Heights.

Christine Louise Mills – Producer/Editor/Writer

Christine Mills holds a BA in Theater Arts from UC San Diego and received her MFA in Film Production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts. Film projects range from narrative fiction to documentary: *Adam* (First Look Festival Silver Prize winner, Spring 2010), *Penny and Charlie* (New Filmmakers New York, 2010), *The Mischievous Case of Miss Cordelia Botkin* (Los Angeles International Women's Film Festival, 2011), and *Where Life Is* (Kate Amend, A.C.E., faculty mentor; Oxford Film Festival, honorable



mention). Television credits include *Junk Gypsies Season 01* (HGTV) and *Season 02* (GAC) as well as *Hairy Bikers* (BBC/History Channel). From 2000 through 2010, she worked as

the founding artistic director of Smart Gals Productions, a non-profit arts organization that created original projects dedicated to building community. Her literary and performance work through Smart Gals Productions has been featured in *LA Weekly*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *High Performance*, *Bitch* magazine, *Another Angle on L.A./AFAR*, and Pacifica Radio's KPFK.

Gretchen Warthen – Cinematographer

Gretchen Warthen has traveled the world with her camera, witnessing and capturing the stories of people's lives from her first self-funded award-winning documentary film 20 years ago to MTV's groundbreaking reality television series *Real World* and *Road Rules*, to the big multi-cam projects of today. In her career she was awarded two Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Certificates of Recognition for her contribution as the Director of Photography for the national Emmy Award-winning NBC series *Starting Over Season 1* and *Season 2*, and has worked as Director of Photography for the international documentary series *Operation Change*, and the Showtime documentary series *The Real L Word*. Gretchen also has DP'd two award-winning narrative feature films, *Hannah Free* and *Jamie and Jessie are Not Together*. She has been a camera operator on popular Emmy Award-winning prime time reality programming, including *Project Runway*, *The Apprentice*, *Bachelor* and *America's Next Top Model*, as well as the completely scripted Kevin Hart reality spoof series, *Real Husbands of Hollywood*. Gretchen's work has been seen on major broadcast and cable networks including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, HBO, Showtime, Bravo, A&E, The History Channel, OWN, MTV, VH-1, Oxygen and Discovery.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT by Betsy Kalin

When I moved to L.A. from the East Coast, I was floored by how much it defied every stereotype. There were so many neighborhoods and corners to explore, so much diversity, and an abundance of fantastic food experiences, but it wasn't until I came to know Boyle Heights that I felt like I finally found the real L.A.

I was looking for a new documentary project when a mutual friend introduced Eric Waterman to me. Eric had an idea for a documentary kindled by his parents' pride in growing up in Boyle Heights. He wanted to tell the story of this "Ellis Island of the West Coast" and give it its due place in history. I knew a little about Boyle Heights already because it had once been home to the largest Jewish community west of Chicago and my cousin taught at Murchison Street Elementary School there in the 1960s. However, nothing prepared me for how Boyle Heights would permeate my life during the next nine years. It got under my skin in such a profound way that I found myself falling in love with the place.

In researching *East LA Interchange*, I was first drawn to the activist history of Boyle Heights. I loved that this neighborhood became a hotbed of radical activism in Los Angeles because of discriminatory housing policies. L.A.'s prevalent racially restrictive housing covenants made Boyle Heights one of the few places in Los Angeles where Mexicans, Jews, African-Americans, Japanese, and other ethnic groups could rent or own property. Here, Eastern European communists and socialists were thrown together with Mexican anarchists and revolutionaries. Boyle Heights' community activism originated in a shared awareness of discrimination and class; radical politics helped form a tight bond across racial and ethnic backgrounds and cemented the neighborhood's status as a multicultural mecca.

Boyle Heights' unique history drew me in but what made me realize that I had found the theme for my documentary was examining from the 1970s to the present. Even as the neighborhood became predominately Mexican American, Boyle Heights remained committed to activism and fighting for its rights as a low-income, immigrant, community of color. Residents today are just as determined to make their voices heard regarding economic and housing opportunities, social and environmental justice, non-discriminatory immigration policies, industrialization, and gentrification. How can anyone not root for a neighborhood that has actively fought discrimination and neglect for over eighty years? Seeing how much our divided, contemporary society wrestles with issues of building and sustaining community, Boyle Heights' cohesive community activism throughout the years fascinated me. I was moved by the endurance of this "dynamic, politically tolerant and community-proud neighborhood" and believe *East LA*

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Interchange will inspire viewers here and in communities elsewhere facing similar issues.

After watching *East LA Interchange*, my hope is viewers will allow Boyle Heights into their hearts. Imagine what would happen in this country if everyone went back to their own communities with the same respect and pride that the people in Boyle Heights have for their neighborhood. Imagine what the U.S. could be if communities like Boyle Heights worked together to secure our nation's pledge of providing equality and justice for all.



CREDITS

Narrated by
Danny Trejo

Directed by
Betsy Kalin

Executive Producers
Betsy Kalin
Eric Waterman

Produced by
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Christine Louise Mills
Gretchen Warthen

Written and Edited by
Christine Louise Mills

Cinematography by
Gretchen Warthen

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Additional Graphics
Glen Travis

Associate Producers
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Jascenna Haislet
Agnes Stauber

Featuring (in order of appearance)

will.i.am
Xavi Moreno

Josefina López
Don Hodes

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Tom Rawlings
Momo Yashima
George J. Sanchez
Mollie Wilson Murphy
Oscar Flores
Leo Frumkin
John Kuo Wei Tchen
Laura Pulido
Floyd Jeter Jr.
Richard Wright
Roy Yoshioka
Cedrick Shimo
Saul Ines
Edilberto Ines
Evelyn Waterman
Harriet Rochlin
Gilbert Estrada
Marisela R. Chávez
Frank Villalobos
José Huizar
Kenneth Wyrick
Diana del Pozo-Mora
Susan Marshall
Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard
Candy Tanamachi
Dian Johnson Harrison
Marsha Maestas-Vasquez
Nancy P. Romero
Howard Shorr
Diane Sayrizi
Father Greg Boyle
Leonardo López
Miguel Meneses
Sandra Nava

Traffic Report by
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Jonathan Schell
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California Institute of Contemporary Arts
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Keck Medical Center of USC
White Memorial Medical Center
Leo and Sherry Frumkin
Drew and Meera Gilbert
Emily Harding-Morick
Gilbert Ontiveros
Larry Villalvazo Scholarship Fund

Music

"Alicia's Theme"

Written by Germaine Franco (ASCAP)/ Performed by Federico Ramos
Courtesy of Metate Music (ASCAP)

"Cartonero"

Written by Germaine Franco (ASCAP) and John Ashton Thomas (PRS)
Courtesy of Metate Music (ASCAP)

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"Communication"

Written by Germaine Franco (ASCAP) and Daniel Lerner (PRS)
Courtesy of Metate Music (ASCAP)

"Moratorium"

Written by Germaine Franco (ASCAP)
Courtesy of Metate Music (ASCAP)

"Trading Pictures"

Written, Performed and Recorded by Raul Pacheco Jr.

"Yiddish Hula Boy"

Courtesy of Janet Klein & Her Parlor Boys from their CD "Put A Flavor To Love"

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AWARDS & PRESS



This Film Is a Fascinating History of Boyle Heights' Cultural Mix

by Amy Nicholson, *LA Weekly* – Film Review

“The history of Boyle Heights is an example of the promise — and peril — of American progress. In her great new documentary *East LA Interchange* filmmaker Betsy Kalin whisks us through this fascinating past.”

<http://www.laweekly.com/film/this-film-is-a-fascinating-history-of-boyle-heights-cultural-mix-5830807>

"East LA Interchange": Film Review

by Ira Israel, *The Huffington Post*

“Not just a story about one neighborhood, "East LA Interchange" is a funny, insightful and poignant documentary that will transform how you think about living in the United States today.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ira-israel/east-la-interchange-film- b_8330982.html

***East L.A. Interchange (2015) Film Review* ★★★★★☆**

by Jennie Kermode, *Eye For Film*

“It’s [East LA Interchange] full of hope and joy...Boyle Heights is a fascinating place because it highlights so much of America's potential and so many of the reasons why it has fallen short...it's a place full of secret history.”

<http://www.eyeforfilm.co.uk/review/east-la-interchange-2015-film-review-by-jennie-kermode>

'Ellis Island of the West Coast': Documentary Delves Into Boyle Heights' Rich History

by Kim Baldonado, *NBC4 Los Angeles* - KNBC

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/documentary-history-will-i-am-Life-Connected-Boyle-Heights-380431841.html>



Review of East LA Interchange

by Nia Blessitt, Urban Democracy Lab

"East LA Interchange offered me new perspectives about how I can process gentrification throughout America and within my own community...It taught me that multiculturalism should be valued, activism is important and effective, and community building means respecting people for their differences. Boyle Heights pushed me to redefine what an 'all-American,' neighborhood is."

<http://urbandemos.nyu.edu/review-of-east-la-interchange/>

East LA Interchange: Diversity of Boyle Heights is a History Lesson for the Nation

by Tom Nguyen, EnclaveLA

"In a time of increasing inequality, tension and divisiveness, and a political climate that once again relies on xenophobia and fear mongering of immigrants, the film and the lesson that Boyle Heights history teaches could not come at a better time."

<http://enclave.la/2016/05/17/east-la-interchange-diversity-of-boyle-heights-is-a-history-lesson-for-the-nation/>

LA Documentary "East LA Interchange" in 2 LA Film Festivals

by Austin Winter-Chase, The Art of Monteque

"East LA Interchange is a wonderful documentary that honors the past and its rich history while showing a bright future for a place that was written off as nothing more than a slum. Betsy Kalin's storytelling shines masterfully throughout this thoughtful and introspective documentary."

<http://theartofmonteque.com/2015/10/08/la-documentary-east-la-interchange-in-2-la-film-festivals/>

Check Out East LA Interchange at NUFF 2015

by Adriane Hoff, Hoff the Beaten Path

"East LA Interchange is an engaging film that ought to be viewed by not just LA residents, but by everyone, to help understand the sociological impact made on certain communities by developers and freeway construction."

<http://hoffthebeatenpath.com/2015/10/05/check-out-east-la-interchange-at-nuff-2015/>

East LA Interchange Doc Highlights History of Boyle Heights

by Daniel Barron, Yay! LA Magazine – Interview with Betsy Kalin

"East LA Interchange...is both a celebration of Boyle Heights' rich multiethnic legacy and a call for reform."

<http://www.yaylamag.com/east-la-interchange/>



A Film About Boyle Heights is One of the Downtown Film Festival's Most Hyped Premieres

by Marielle Wakim, *Los Angeles Magazine* – Interview with Betsy Kalin

<http://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/after-eight-years-in-the-making-east-l-a-interchange-will-premiere-at-the-downtown-film-festival/>

East L.A. Interchange—Great New Film About Jewish History in Los Angeles

by Rabbi Robin Podolsky, *Jewish Journal*

“East L.A. Interchange teaches the possibility of an American dream far removed from suburban homogeneity. It tells of a place and time in which Latinos, Jews, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and self-described “rednecks” found a way to live with one another such that their own cultures thrived even as they evolved into a common American experience.”

http://www.jewishjournal.com/erevrav/item/east_l.a._interchangegreat_new_film_about_jewish_history_in_los_angeles

Danny Trejo Narrates This Doc on How Boyle Heights Was the Ellis Island of the West Coast

by Andrew S. Vargas, REMEZCLA

“East L.A. Interchange...tell(s) the story of a neighborhood that somehow embodies all the contradictions and struggles of America’s urban communities over the last fifty years. We only hope that in 10 years this documentary is viewed as a victorious battle cry and not an elegy for a lost community.”

<http://remezcla.com/film/east-la-interchange-trailer-documentary-boyle-heights/>

Review: An Essential Documentary for Angelenos, East LA Interchange

by Jeremy Ross, *Living Out Loud* – LA

“East LA Interchange is a critical documentary for those who wish to know about how Los Angeles developed, not just for those wishing to know about Boyle Heights in particular...”

<http://www.lol-la.com/review-an-essential-documentary-for-angelenos-east-la-interchange/>

PBIFF 2016 Delights Audiences

by Hope Wilkos, Pure Fame Media

“[East LA Interchange’s] theme could easily be applied to any large metropolitan area within the nation which falls victim to the rapid development of their region. It is a topic that deserves greater attention and investigation and Betsy drives the point home.”

<http://www.purefamemedia.com/pbiff-2016-delights-audiences/>



EAST LA INTERCHANGE: “If This Film Could Vote” With Director Betsy Kalin

by Quendrith Johnson, *Awards Intelligencer*

“No matter how you cast your ballot, cast your gaze toward *East LA Interchange* because it hints at a peaceful solution to the Gordian knot of fairness with regard to marginalized communities in terms of race, poverty, housing.”

http://awfj.org/awards-intelligencer/2015/09/23/east-la-interchange-if-this-film-could-vote-with-director-betsy-kalin/?doing_wp_cron=1443062353.6536068916320800781250

East LA Interchange: Talking about community in the U.S.

by Kris Kington-Barker, KCBX FM – Central Coast Public Radio

<http://kcbx.org/post/east-la-interchange-talking-about-community-us>

East LA Interchange documentary about Boyle Heights history premieres Sunday July 26 at Downtown Film Festival Los Angeles

by Tom Nguyen, *EnClave Los Angeles*

“It is often said that one cannot understand the present without knowing the past. East LA Interchange is premiering during a very apt time...The film reminds us community solidarity and political activism in the face of many challenges has always been a part of Boyle Heights history.”

<http://enclavelosangeles.com/2015/07/24/east-la-interchange-documentary-about-boyle-heights-history-premieres-sunday-july-26-at-downtown-los-angeles-film-festival/>

Teachers see diversity lesson in new documentary of old Boyle Heights

by Mike Szymanski, *LA School Report*

“A new documentary...is drawing the attention of educators as a way show how the East LA neighborhood once stood as a monument to diversity and community strength.”

<http://laschoolreport.com/teachers-see-diversity-lesson-in-new-documentary-of-old-boyle-heights/>

I Left My Heart in Boyle Heights ~ Betsy Kalin, director “East LA Interchange”

by Betsy Kalin, *L.A. TACO*

“I think that Boyle Heights’ story is the same story that many communities across the country are currently facing...Imagine what would happen in this country if everyone went back to their own communities with the same respect and pride that the people in Boyle Heights have for their neighborhood.”

<http://www.lataco.com/personal-history-i-left-my-heart-in-boyle-heights-betsy-kalin-director-east-la-interchange/>



'East LA Interchange' Film Documents Boyle Heights' Evolution

by Gloria Alvarez, Eastern Group Publication News

"You've probably heard the old adage, 'All roads lead to Rome.' In Los Angeles, 'All freeways lead to East Los Angeles.'

<http://egpnews.com/2015/07/east-la-interchange-film-documents-boyle-heights-evolution/>

Neighborhood Storyline

by Christine Coyle, Loomis Chaffee Magazine

"It's a cautionary, but hopeful, tale about how migration and displacement can affect a community."

https://issuu.com/loomischaffee/docs/loomis_chaffee_spring_2016

L.A. Jewish Film Festival focuses on Hollywood history

by Bob Strauss, Los Angeles Daily News

<http://www.dailynews.com/arts-and-entertainment/20160513/la-jewish-film-festival-focuses-on-hollywood-history>

Bloomfield Filmmaker Part Of New Haven Film Festival

by Susan Dunne, The Hartford Courant

<http://www.courant.com/entertainment/movies/hc-new-haven-film-festival-20151109-story.html>

Boyle Heights activism explored in 'East LA Interchange' documentary

by Antonio Mejías-Rentas, Boyle Heights Beat

<http://www.boyleheightsbeat.com/boyle-heights-activism-explored-in-east-la-interchange-documentary-2-11025>

New Movie Tells the Story of the Long Boyle Heights Struggle

by Bianca Barragan, Curbed LA

http://la.curbed.com/archives/2015/07/boyle_heights_documentary_east_la_interchange.php

Boyle Heights Doc Explores The Past And Future Of L.A.'s Ellis Island

by Danny Jensen, LAist

http://laist.com/2015/07/20/boyle_heights_documentary_east_la_interchange.php

Boyle Heights, the Land of Freeways

by Avishay Artsy, Jewish Journal

http://www.jewishjournal.com/culture/article/boyle_heights_the_land_of_freeways



Red Carpet Interview with East LA Interchange Team – Hollywood Social Lounge

by Aaron Sanchez and Kelly Dolan, KMET 1490 AM

[http://104.131.129.5/podcasts/?name=2015-09-26 hollywood social lounge september 26 interviews.mp3](http://104.131.129.5/podcasts/?name=2015-09-26%20hollywood%20social%20lounge%20september%2026%20interviews.mp3)

Beloit prepares for 11th annual international film festival Feb. 19-28

by Elliot Hughes, GazetteXtra

[http://www.gazettextra.com/20160210/beloit prepares for 11th annual international film festival feb 19 28](http://www.gazettextra.com/20160210/beloit-prepares-for-11th-annual-international-film-festival-feb-19-28)

Film features SLO County resident and former track star

by Dan Kreiger, The Tribune

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/times-past/article64281437.html>

Frozen River Film Festival showcases local filmmakers

by Michaela Gaffke, The Winonan

<http://thewinonan.winonastateu.com/frozen-river-film-festival-showcases-local-filmmakers/>

Featured Alumni: Interview with Betsy Kalin '91CC

by Patty Tsai, CAA Arts Access

<http://alumniarts.columbia.edu/content/featured-alumni-interview-betsy-kalin-91cc>

Episode 330 – Ghostbusters – Betsy Kalin

by Graham Elwood and Chris Mancini, Comedy Film Nerds

<http://comedyfilmnerds.libsyn.com/ep-330-ghostbusters-betsy-kalin>