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JULY 4, 2007 Celeste Aller

BY [PATTI MURPHY](#)

As the events and rental coordinator at Boise Art Museum (BAM) and volunteer publicist for the Idaho International Film Festival, Celeste Aller has to have an eye for details, be flexible and think big.

No problem for this 34-year-old, whose history includes; growing up in the woods with hippie parents, dissecting cadavers in paramedic training, making films in the Czech Republic, helping coordinate the San Francisco International Arts Festival, working for internationally known filmmakers, and hobknobbing with stars like Sean Connery, Charlize Theron, Matt Damon and Heath Ledger.

Her passion is art in general, and filmmaking in particular. She hopes her knowledge of the film industry and love for its magic can help our state's budding film industry grow.

How do you manage people wandering around during an event? Do you block off part of the museum?

We don't, and that's one of the greatest things when you come to BAM and you have your event—your guests actually have all of BAM. You get access to every exhibition that's here. It's certainly one of the selling points, and it surprises a lot of people. The building is so beautiful, particularly at night in the sculpture court, with those impossibly high ceilings and all the light exchange from inside and out. It's just beautiful.

You had an interesting childhood.

I was born in Takilma, Ore., and my dad was a logger and a total redneck, and my mom was a hippie. I grew up in these old logging cabins, and there was a commune up the road called Sunstar. I felt like I grew up in a tribe because there were all these moms and kids and we all got together and ran around the woods naked. It was a very *Little House on the Prairie* existence, except for all the psychotropic substances that were around. I didn't have a lot of structure. As a result, I don't do drugs, and I don't enjoy being out of control in any way. I rebelled and ended up way more conservative than my parents in that aspect.

What did you do after college?

I was in New York and found a job working for Peter Haje, the executive vice president and chief counsel of Time Warner, as his personal assistant, which was fun but kind of schleppy, you know, doing a lot of dry cleaning and shopping. But in between, there was a lot of party planning and hostessing. I cooked a lot for them, then turned into a full-time catering chef, and I would cater all their events and did a lot of intimate fund-raising events and soirees.

How did you get involved in film?

I moved to San Francisco and worked on some little independent films doing production coordination and management. I worked with the San Francisco International Film Festival on and off for 10 years. Through the festival, I met Ben Tucek, a Czech filmmaker, who was there with his film, *Devcatko*, and he said if I was ever over in his country to come to work for his production company. So, I kind of wanted an adventure and decided to quit my job, give up my apartment and I got on a plane and flew to Prague. I really got whooshed into the film world quickly over there.

Then you came back to the United States?

Yes, after about two years I was ready to come back to my life. Before I went over to Prague, I had worked with Tom Luddy in San Francisco. He's a really old-school film producer. He did all the film archives for Francis Ford Coppola, and he started the Telluride Film Festival, and he's produced a number of films. So, when I came back from Prague, I told him I needed a job, and the Documentary Film Institute at San Francisco State was forming and they needed a coordinator. So, I was hired to essentially inaugurate the events there.

What can you tell us about the Idaho International Film Festival?

This is the fifth year of the Idaho International Film Festival, and it is such a pivotal year because that's sort of the make-or-break year. Festivals crop up and they come and go, but they have to find their niche and what kind of a festival they want to be. I started working with them last year and came in as sort of the festival person because I had done it for so long. And I found them so receptive and really wanting it to take off and turn it into something.

Who picks the films?

A lot is programmed by Bruce Fletcher, who started the festival with the folks at KNIN-TV five years ago. Ultimately, we take submissions, and we do a strong Idaho programming schedule for our local filmmakers

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every year. But right now, we're trying to get something big. Like, who can we pull in to really make a splash so we have our name on the map?

How did you end up in Boise?

I moved to Boise in 2005 with my boyfriend, who is a Boise native. It's taken me awhile to get settled. I feel really lucky to have found BAM because I get to use my skills in this beautiful building every day and be around people who love what they do. The people who work at BAM are so forward-thinking and so knowledgeable. This is a really great place, and it certainly helped me ground myself in Boise. Boise is a very different place than San Francisco or certainly New York or Prague, you know (laughs).

What's good, what's not so good?

Not being near an ocean is probably the hardest thing. I feel like my energy bounces off the mountains (laughs).

What sort of reaction have you gotten from "big city" production crews coming to Idaho?

Last summer, I worked on a commercial shoot with Ogilvy & Mather from New York, who came out to interview farmers who are making bio-diesel from sugar beets. And we were driving out to Caldwell, and they were like, "Oh my God, is that more corn? There's so much corn!" They kept talking in this quasi-yokel Idaho accent, and I am driving the car and I'm thinking, "Wow, people have such a misperception of this place." It was the first time I really felt that I didn't want people to make fun of Idaho! They were judging this entire state of people—and me—at the same time. I just think Idaho is a fantastic place for so many reasons.

You've done a lot in a short time. What's next?

I feel like I've got big things to do. I don't know what they are. But I know I'm not done yet.

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