

WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

Diggers at the 2007 Wisconsin Film Festival
Finding the serious humor in clams on Saturday at the Orpheum
David Medaris on Monday 04/16/2007 12:04:06,

Upraised middle fingers abound in *Diggers*, a 2006 release about struggling Long Island clam harvesters. Like the phrase it represents, the salute has a variety of meanings in the film. Most are more benign than you might think, involving gradations of respect not always associated with one's middle digit.

Such subtleties run throughout Ken Marino's intimate script, which finds humor in hardship without sacrificing the narrative's essential humanity. When a corporate clamming operation stakes a claim to some of the local clambers' best beds, the core characters confront the loss of their livelihoods -- the same way of life that had been pursued by their fathers and their fathers' fathers, and might have been passed on to their children and their children's children.

The ensemble cast is superb in its embodiment of community residents whose individual responses to the crisis, while somber, are leavened with comedy. (During its screening on Saturday night, *Diggers* met with frequent laughter from the Orpheum Theater audience.) Katherine Dieckmann's direction is spot-on in tone, encompassing bouts of profanity so operatic as to be hilarious, but also negotiating the mournful social fragility inherent in a community's changing way of life.

Four thumbs up on a scale of five.

Related Articles:

[Your source on the 2007 Wisconsin Film Festival](#)

Article Tools:

Share this Article: