

UNDERGROUND FILM MACGYVER



What if zombies didn't eat people, and just wanted their old jobs back? How would colonial-era duellist Aaron Burr handle a space-alien invasion? And just how homicidal can a Burger World chef get?

Ask Creative Alliance Moviemakers (Camm) member Ryan Graham, 28, the Baltimore-based film director and one-fourth of the creative cabal known as 37.5 Productions (the rest of the crew are Curtis Crispin, Ryan Stachurski, and Tracey Grahn). The 37.5 Productions film *Aaron Burr vs. the Space Aliens* won third place in Creative Alliance's 2003 CAMm Slamm, an annual competition that gives up-and-coming filmmakers forty-eight hours to write, shoot and edit a ten-minute film (see p. 3

for this fall's CAMm Slamm). Meanwhile, 37.5's first feature-length film, the zombie movie redux *Livelihood* (shot entirely in Baltimore) is on schedule for a January 2005 release.

And *A Dead Guy Can't Flip a Burger* (1994), 37.5's debut effort? "It's awful...and it took forever," says Ryan. "But that's how you learn, screwing up and starting over."

Of course, sometimes just getting started in the first place is the hardest part of all. Ryan and company hadn't worked together on a film project for two years before deciding to participate in last fall's CAMm Slamm.

"We would always sit around and talk about making movies," explains Ryan, describing

a situation familiar—and frustrating—to any creative artist. "But the idea would just float away. CAMm Slamm gave us the excuse to do it, to actually get out there and finish it."

Not only that, says Ryan, but the contest also helped 37.5 meet other local filmmakers who are now helping with 37.5's next project, the feature-length *Livelihood*.

This fall, Ryan will be sharing some of what he has learned along the way: starting in late October, he and two other 37.5 Productions members will offer a four-session Creative Alliance workshop focusing on low-budget, do-it-yourself filmmaking (see p. 11 for details). "We're trying to make people into film-making MacGyvers," laughs Ryan.

Thinking more broadly about the role of Creative Alliance, Ryan says the organization has helped him feel at home in Baltimore.

"A good group of people congregate at The Patterson—good artists, good musicians, good filmmakers. That's important because it makes you feel like you belong to a community. To me, that's a big deal."