

diversions

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CARRBORO FILM FESTIVAL

Third annual festival aims to promote growing film community

BY MIKE HENSON
STAFF WRITER

On Sunday afternoon filmmakers who have "breathed the good air of Orange County" will showcase their work at the third annual Carrboro Film Festival.

In addition to requiring that directors are local, the festival has a 20-minute time limit for film submission, said Selena Lauterer, festival chairwoman. Other than that, almost anything goes.

The Carrboro Film Festival, to be held in Century Hall of the Carrboro Century Center, was started in 2006 by Nic Beery and Jackie Helvey in order to create a community event to highlight local filmmaking talent.

Lauterer attributes the festival's continued and growing success with the "creative and engaged" people of the community.

"They're people who are interested in seeing what people around them are creating. Carrboro seems to be a really cohesive town and folks in Chapel Hill will come over and be a part of it ... but the flavor is very Carrboro," Lauterer said.

The festival features a wide variety of films, from comedies to documentaries, dramas, experimental pieces and even music videos.

This diversity is part of what makes this festival so great in the eyes of Scott Conary, co-owner of festival sponsor Open Eye Café. The films are "very diverse, they don't lock into any particular genre. The key is that they are all North Carolina related films."

Now in its third year, the festival has attracted a standing-room-only crowd of 400 to 500 viewers each during the past two years and is expected to draw a similar, if not a larger, crowd this year.

This popularity extends to the influx of entries as well.

Of the more than 80 films that were submitted, 23 have been selected for viewing Sunday.

Kat Keene Hogue, a senior journalism major at UNC, has two films in this year's festival.

"I'm excited to be a part of the Carrboro Film Festival because it's a great local arts initiative that is helping to facilitate connections and dialogue between filmmakers from different walks of life," said Hogue in an e-mail.

She continued, "It's exciting to see what my neighbors and community members are up to and also to have an outlet for my own work."

Hogue's two films, "Learning From Andy" and "A Kid and a Goat," are documentaries dealing with two very different young boys as they make their way through their young lives.

"Learning From Andy" chronicles the path of Andy Miyares as he makes his way to Shanghai, China for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games as a record holding Special Olympic swimmer.

"A Kid and a Goat" documents Dylan Skidmore's first trip to agriculture camp in Waynesville, N.C., with his beloved goat, Tinkerbell.

The festival also includes films by the Durham-based Movie Makers, an organization that allows children to write, direct, act in and produce their own films.

"Afraid of the World," a comedy about anxiety and attraction amidst the ever blurring line between fantasy and reality, and "Thought Bubble," a comedy based on the revealing of a teenager's private thoughts, were both contributed by the program's advanced class for older teens.

"The Carrboro Film Festival is an amazing opportunity for filmmakers of all ages to come together and share their art," said Melissa Lozoff, the founder of Movie Makers.

"Most film festivals are either for adults or for kids. It is nice that the Carrboro Film Festival allows and encourages people of all ages."

In addition to the 23 films that will be aired in three separate "acts," this year also marks the introduction of a few new elements to the Festival, designed to make it more interactive between the filmmakers and the audience.

After each block of films, there will be a Q & A section for the audience to ask questions of the directors.

This desire for audience interaction will spill over to the after-party hosted and sponsored by Open Eye Café, in order to give the audience a chance to meet and interact with the filmmakers.

"Last year the bubble popped at the end of it and everyone just walked away. This year everyone wanted to mark the end a little more with a party," Conary said.

This year also features another first: parental advisory. Although the first two blocks of films are appropriate for all ages, Lauterer said some material in the third block has been deemed a little more explicit and graphic and might be "a little unsuitable for children."

But organizers don't think that will take away from the celebration of local creativity.

"You will see things that are unexpected, that will delight the senses, that will surprise you, inspire you, and give you cause," Lauterer said. "For me, these films have really enriched how I see the world."

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