

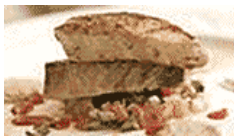
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arts, culture & entertainment

Video festival begins rolling tonight

BY MICHELLE THERIAULT
Statesman Journal
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In 1989, a teenage Ryan Sage took his first date to see "Parenthood" at what was the Southgate Cinemas in Salem.

Sage, now a 32-year-old Los Angeles filmmaker, is in Salem this weekend to watch his own movie, "As Seen on TV" on the very same screen at the Northern Lights Theatre Pub.

"Full circle," he said. "I get to come back and watch something I made on the very same screen I saw so many movies on as a kid."

The Mid-Valley Video Festival, which runs tonight through Sunday, brings a bevy of local, national and international independent films to Salem, as well as 40 filmmakers.

The festival received a record number of submissions this year, according to programming director Ross Swartzendruber. Organizers were pleased -- and a little surprised -- to get entries from as far away as India and Germany.

The festival is meant to be a venue for local filmmakers, Swartzendruber said.

"We just want to give people a chance to see their hard work pay off and see their film on the big screen," he said.

This year's festival features 62 short-feature, full-length-feature, music-video, documentary and animated films, as well as several with Oregon connections making encore appearances.

One of those is last year's festival winner, "Clearcut: The Story of Philomath," whose director, Peter Richardson, also is serving as a festival juror. The jury also will include Jonathan Ferrantelli, a post-production supervisor of the recent Sofia Coppola film "Marie Antoinette."

Starting with tonight's sneak preview of environmental documentaries, films will be screened at Northern Lights Theatre Pub and the Historic Grand Theatre in Salem. The Golden Pioneer Awards on Sunday will recognize outstanding films from the festival.

Workshops about Oregon's film industry and other filmmaking topics will be offered as well.

Some of the highlights

"Assumed Sight" This hallucinatory short animation about a tree with eyeballs instead of leaves was made by Kevin England and Sean Farris, two 22-year-olds from Aumsville.

"It took well over several hundred hours," said England, who attends Chemeketa Community College.

"The Future of Food" This documentary about industrial agriculture was directed by Jerry Garcia's widow, Deborah Koons Garcia, and has been screened at other film festivals.

"Truckers and Hookers" The documentary follows a cross-country hitchhiking trip in the company of long-haul truckers.

"Tree Cutting" Merry Prankster and Ken Kelsey confidante Ken Babbs's entry is a short documentary about cutting down a tree.

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"Yellow" Portland director Nick Peterson and musician Eric Schopmeyer collaborated on a modern romantic comedy that turns, suddenly, into a full-fledged and raucous musical. It's retro and fresh at the same time.



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"The Tillamook Treasure" A glossy fantasy story about a teenage girl who meets a mystical elk on the Oregon Coast. The film is getting recognition as a feature that has a good chance of making it to mainstream distribution.

Mid-Valley Video Festival

In addition to film screenings and workshops, the festival includes several parties. For full details on prices and scheduling, go to www.mvffest.org.

Opening night party with the funhouse strippers: 10 p.m. Friday at Grand Ballroom. Cost: \$5 or stub from any Friday film.

"Goonies" party with dingo and THE feral clowns: 11 p.m. Saturday at Northern Lights Theatre Pub. Cost: \$3.

Golden pioneer awards ceremony: 3 p.m. Sunday at Northern Lights Theatre Pub. Cost: \$5.

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