



PRESS RELEASE

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Second annual Johnstown Film & Wine Festival set for July 12-14

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. –The Johnstown Film Festival will be held July 12-14, showcasing the talent of filmmakers from across the region and around the world. Now in its second year, the festival is a film shorts competition.

Screenings of selected entries will take place on Thursday, July 12 and Friday, July 13 at the Johnstown Flood Museum theater. There will be two blocks of films shown each evening, from 6:00-8:00 p.m and 8:00-10:00 p.m.; tickets for each two-hour block will be \$5 at the door.

On Saturday, July 14 the top entries and three winners will be screened in the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center courtyard (the event will be moved indoors in case of rain). The doors will open at 8:00 p.m., and screenings of the films will begin at dusk. Tickets for the Saturday event, which include two wine tastings, are \$15 and may be purchased online at www.johnstownfilmfest.org, at the gift shops of the Johnstown Flood Museum and Heritage Discovery Center, or at the door.

“We were delighted by the response we got last year – sellout crowds at each evening of the festival,” said Lee Kring, one of the volunteer organizers. “We’re excited about the increase in entries this year, and that we’ve established a new event on Johnstown’s cultural calendar.”

The festival was announced in late 2006, and the deadline for entries was March 30. Many of the participating filmmakers had some connection to Johnstown or western Pennsylvania, but there were entrants from Europe, South America and Asia. More than 70 films were entered in the competition, representing a wide variety of genres – documentaries, animation, dramas, comedies and more. From these, volunteer judges scored the films, and the top 49 were accepted for screening. The best youth entries and youth winner will be shown on Friday night. The top-scoring films are shown on Saturday,

closing with the three winners. (See enclosed schedule for a complete screening schedule).

The winners of this year's festival are:

First Place – “The Counter” by Lauren Wagner. In 1962 Alabama, three black students attempt to desegregate the whites-only lunch counter. The diner's waitress must decide if she will follow the local law of segregation or help the students while members of the town watch her every move. Filmmaker Lauren Wagner holds a BA in Television Production from San Francisco State University and an MFA from the University of Southern California's esteemed School of Cinematic Arts. She has worked in both television and film for the last 12 years, and currently lives in Los Angeles. "The Counter" is her debut as a narrative film writer/director.

Second Place – “Crossing” by Riad Galayini. Her mother dies. Her cat leaves to find a better life in the house across the street. And her alcoholic father takes up permanent residence on the couch. Amanda and her little brother struggle to keep things together, but sometimes the only way home is to leave it. Filmmaker Riad Galayini has directed commercials and plays in Los Angeles, and this is her third film.

Third Place – “The Apologist” by Guy Shahar. Joe is a serial apologist. Totally self-absorbed, he says "I'm sorry" so often, even he doesn't know what the words mean anymore -- that is, until a female he tramples refuses his apology. Face to face with his own hypocrisy, he learns just how powerful sincerity can be. Filmmaker Guy Shahar is a graduate of the New York Film Academy and The New School and has served as writer/director/producer of over 25 short films for the prolific Group 101. His award-winning work has appeared on television and in several dozen film festivals worldwide.

Youth Award Winner – "The Jig by Racecar Backwards” by Tom Getty. This music video spotlights Racecar Backwards' song "The Jig." By Tom Getty, a Johnstown native who is 18 years old and won the Youth Award at the 2006 festival.

The top-scoring film from the region was “Germanity,” by Matt Fuller and Andy McNeil of Pittsburgh. “We wanted to put out a quality product with low to no budget,” said Fuller, who holds a degree in video production from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. “This is really our first crack at a serious film, and we’d heard of the Johnstown Film & Wine Festival and decided to send it in.”

The film festival is the project of the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Initiative Class of 2006, which includes Mike Docherty, Matt Hughes, Lee Kring and Lynne Hood. The group is working with the Johnstown Area Heritage Association to produce the festival.

Each adult ticketholder will receive two wine tastings from a selection of wines. Wine will also be available for purchase by the glass. In addition, popcorn, beer, and other light refreshments will be available for purchase. Starbucks will also offer a complimentary selection of hot and cold beverages.

Any original short film of 30 minutes or less was eligible for the competition, which will include cash awards for first (\$300), second (\$200) and third place (\$100). Films of all genres were accepted, and there is a special category for filmmakers aged 18 and under with a cash prize of \$100.

The Tribune-Democrat is the major sponsor of the event. Several area organizations, in addition to JAHA, have been instrumental in supporting the planning of the festival, especially Clark Productions, a local video production company.

A complete screening schedule, including stills of the films, information on the filmmakers and more, is available at the festival's website, www.johnstownfilmfest.org.

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving and showcasing Johnstown's unique history to the nation through high-quality educational, cultural and recreational experiences. JAHA owns and operates the Johnstown Flood Museum and the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, and produces the AmeriServ FolkFest, a 3-day free music and food festival held annually over Labor Day weekend; events commemorating the 1889 Johnstown flood; and a wide variety of additional cultural programming. The Wagner-Ritter House & Garden opened in 2006, and the Johnstown Children's Museum will open in 2008. For more information on JAHA programs, museums and events, visit www.jaha.org.

The screening schedule for the Johnstown Film & Wine Festival is as follows:

Thursday, July 12

Johnstown Flood Museum theatre

Block 1, beginning at 6:00 p.m.:

- **Karl Bites** by Fred Wilder of Fullerton, Calif. This film blends stop motion animation and live action, telling the story of Karl, a robot vampire that craves human women.
- **Dislandia** by Brian Viveros & Eriijk Ressler. Dislandia is a disturbing observance of a child existing in an indistinguishable time and place. Filmmaker Eriijk Ressler's parents are from Johnstown.
- **Santa's Flaws** by Stuart Harrison of Devon, England. Father Christmas exists! Unfortunately he is a pessimist and his reindeer have babies. Can Alfonso and his genie deliver a billion presents in eight hours?
- **Sleepless Night**. In this animated short, the character attempts to sleep, only to be woken up repeatedly -- by objects in his room coming to life. Filmmaker Mark Cooper is a senior communications student at Penn State Altoona.
- **The Light-Speed Machine** by Stuart Harrison of Devon, England. A yokel inventor has made a machine capable of breaking the light speed barrier... and takes it on a voyage.
- **Drug (Friend)** by Lala Akhundova of Moscow, Russia. The tale of a friendship between a young man and a horse, and a choice made between liberty and prison.
- **Windber After Midnight**. This film is an homage to German expressionist silent films, which typically featured dark, psychological themes, gothic backdrops, symbolism, stylized atmospheres and dramatic lighting. Filmmaker Bill Eggert is a native of Western Pennsylvania who recently moved back to Johnstown from Atlanta.
- **My Good Yet Immensely Evil Friend Evan**. A sinister man convinces an average Joe to take over the world. However, things don't go as planned.... Filmmaker Renold Sossong is a junior at Bishop McCort High School, who directed this film together with Owen Standley, a student at Mt. Aloysius.

Block 2, beginning at 8:00 p.m.:

- **Hellfire Blow**. This parody of action movie trailers combines face-melting action with satirical comedy. Filmmakers Mike Bowers and Mark Cooper are senior communications students at Penn State Altoona.

- **Zapruder Dreams.** A young woman's socialpolitical Internet blog attracts the attention of a mysterious stranger's extremist group, and she becomes an unwitting player in their dangerous scheme. First-time director Randy Jeffreys collaborated with first-time writer producer Ian Miller of Johnstown on this film.
- **Waterman** by Anthony Frazier of Indiana, Pa. A music video featuring local singer-songwriter Tim Dabbs and his song "Waterman," chronicling the lives of Chesapeake Bay waterman who make their living dredging for oysters with the oldest commercial sailing fleet in America.
- **Lawn of the Dead** by Matt Towers of Pittsburgh. George and his family are held under seige by the walking dead.
- **Requiem of a Muse** by Cristina Pinhiero & Andre Scucato. Based on a poem of Fernando Campos, the film explores the death of art.
- **Poet's Train** by Cristina Pinhiero & Andre Scucato. The poet dances metaphors on the train, painting and dancing with the camera in verse calligraphy.
- **Ghost Stories from the Burgh--The Ghost of Hartwood Acres** by Bob Bender & Chris Cameron. This episode of "Ghost Stories from the Burgh" explains the history of Hartwood Acres and reveals the mysteries and unexplained events that occur there.

Friday, July 13

Johnstown Flood Museum

Block 1, beginning at 6:00 p.m.:

- **Abbyss of Soul** by Cristina Pinhiero & Andre Scucato. The poet Antonin Artaud lived 9 years of his life in sanitoriums in France.
- **The Passing** by Aaron Gentzler. The friendship between two couples is forever changed by a woman's death. Filmmaker Aaron Gentzler is a graduate of Penn State.
- **Never Everything.** A man who has everything comes to realize he has nothing to live for. Filmmaker Timothy Gaer is originally from northeast Pennsylvania.
- **Sensorium** by Karen Aqua & Ken Field of Cambridge, Mass. A hand-drawn experimental animation exploring the relationship between music and image.
- **CHAP XV:12** by Fernando Pinheiro of Brazil. This experimental documentary explores the theme that "all you need is love."

- **Cul De Sac** by Ian Rummell of Johnstown. A brash college graduate searches for answers, while resenting and remonstrating societal norms.
- **Neglected Laundry** by Dylan Hunter
- **She Sank on Shallow Bank** by Clifton Childree & Nikki Rollason of Miami. The film is a disjointed narrative about a washed-up girl and her magical postmortem adventures.
- **Cigar at the Beach** by Stephen Keep Mills. A modern tale starring the male psyche, as a married man filters the demands of domestic life through fantasy.

Block 2, beginning at 8:00 p.m.

- ***Youth Entry* Kyle & The Magic Cookie.** A genie tells Kyle to eat a magic cookie when the time feels right -- and when he does, it sends poor Kyle on a journey he'll never forget. Filmmaker Samuel Weber is a senior at Cambria Heights High School.
- ***Youth Entry* The Super School.** It's Patrick's first day at the super school, and he's really excited! What he doesn't know is that he'll encounter very unique people, from his best friend Tom to a hot chick. By Keegan Terek and Ryan Dabbs, whose film "Odin's Super Safe Adventures" was screened in 2006.
- ***Youth Award Winner* "The Jig" by Racecar Backwards** by Tom Getty. This music video spotlights Racecar Backwards' song "The Jig." By Tom Getty, who won the Youth Award at the 2006 festival.
- **A Roof Above.** This short focuses on a woman who decides to leave her husband because her nephew is coming home. Filmmaker Andy Kelemen created this film as his senior thesis for graduation from Pittsburgh Filmmakers in video production.
- **Coolsville.** Filmmaker Blair Murphy of Windber hosted a party for artists, celebrating the American beat poets of the 1950s. This film is the final expression of that gathering.
- **Get Tested.** This documentary is about an individual living with HIV, detailing his life while answering questions about the disease. Filmmaker Todd Bennett is a student at Penn State Altoona.

Saturday, July 14

Heritage Discovery Center courtyard

Doors open at 8:00 p.m.; films begin at dusk

- **The Tell-Tale Heart.** An adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's story. Christopher David Collins is a local actor who has performed with the Parlor Players at the Dillweed Bed and Breakfast for many years.
- **Recliner**, an animated short by Phantheop Wiantrakoon, a graduate of the Vancouver Film School. What seems like another typical walk home from Charlie's miserable job will turn into a discovery that could change his life around.
- **Who's On First?** -- Steve Barr & Danny Grossman. In the spirit of Abbott and Costello's classic vaudeville sketch, a customer at a video store has trouble finding out when his rentals are due back.
- **The Offering.** Inspired by The Young Man and His Death, a ballet choreography written by Jean Cocteau (1889-1963). Filmmaker Paul Lee has organized and curated film festivals in Canada, U.S.A., Japan and Thailand. This is his third film.
- **The Donut Gun** by Kev Stock of Ebensburg. A young renegade scientist has created an astounding donut lazer gun. . . or has he?
- **Scenic View.** Lloyd's attempt to photograph a passing sailboat is complicated by an uncooperative camera. Filmmaker Brandon Shakley is a graduate of Purdue University and Vancouver Film School.
- **Out of Order**, an animated short by Earl Brawley of the Vancouver Film School. In this classic battle between good and evil, a devil attempts to use an out of order vending machine to outwit an angel.
- **A Garota (The Kid)** by Fernando Pinheiro of Brazil, where estimated 25 million children and young people are child laborers, rather than students.
- **Alex Scott -- A Stand for Hope.** What is now a nationwide movement started as the inspiration of 4-year-old cancer patient Alex Scott who had the idea to host a lemonade stand in her own front yard to raise money for cancer research. Filmmaker Larry Mendte is an anchor on CBS 3 of Philadelphia.
- **A Life of Death.** Throughout the 20th Century, and now into the 21st, wars have been waged all over the globe under the banner proclamation that conflict ultimately leads to world peace. This is award-winning filmmaker Dawn Westlake's fourth short.
- **If There Were No Lutherans, Would There Be Green Jell-O?** A hilarious look at a Lutheran minister's unique communications with those who drive by his church. Filmmaker Gayle Knutson is a 25-year veteran of the film and television industry.

- **Double Date** by Dave Stock of Ebensburg. A romantic comedy about the danger of double dates.
- **Anesthesia** by Adam Kargman. A patient's failed anesthetic agent leaves her fully conscious during open-heart surgery, but paralyzed and unable to communicate with her doctors - probably the most terrifying thing you can imagine, and this short film exploits that fear to the max!
- **The Option of War** by Nick Fox-Gieg. In this adaptation of an early Kafka story, a soldier is taken prisoner in the night by a pack of jackals.
- **Andy**, an animated short by Terence Healy. "If you're going to be good at anything you do, don't go against yourself. Use what you have." So says Andy, a short, big-nosed, bald actor from Brooklyn who finds his acting career slowing down as he ages.
- **Germanity** by Matt Fuller & Andy McNeil of Pittsburgh. Set around a sick German man, the film grapples with cultural barriers both linguistically and visually in an attempt to showcase our common bond: humanity.
- ***Third Place Winner* The Apologist** by Guy Shahar. Joe is a serial apologist. Totally self-absorbed, he says "I'm sorry" so often, even he doesn't know what the words mean anymore-that is, until a female he tramples refuses his apology. Filmmaker Guy Shahar is a graduate of the New York Film Academy and The New School and has served as writer/director/producer of over 25 short films for the prolific Group 101.
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