FILM

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short films viewed at either hq or La Grande's Granada Theatre.

"Every film has had a great audience. Every filmmaker has felt well received and welcome," Jennings said on the final evening of the festival. "The responses we're getting back from some of the filmmakers are (they were), in retrospect, sad to be leaving the valley and left enchanted."

Some films, such as Friday night's "Long Lost," were followed by in-theater Q&A sessions with one or more of the movie's producers, directors or actors. Following another Friday film, "Anote's Ark," Eastern Oregon Climate Coalition, Oregon Rural Action, members of Union County's community of Pacific Islanders and festival-goers joined in a panel discussion on one of the film's central themes — climate change.

Fourteen additional films were also available 24/7 throughout the festival as part of an online program through Filmmaker Magazine's website.

"One of the most impressive things for me this year was witnessing the strength of our open submissions," said program director Ian Clark. "In the past, I'd estimate fewer than 5 percent of the films we've shown were received via open submissions. However, 70 percent of the films this year were submitted in our open call. This is a testament to what we're building out here."

Hq hosted a full house again Saturday morning (this time with mimosas in hand) for "Brunch with Bruce" — a Q&A session and conversation with actor/producer/director Bruce Campbell. Jennings took the stage to introduce Campbell to an eager audience of festival-goers and a foot-tall, chainsaw-wielding action figure of his "Evil Dead" character — complete with catchphrases.

"Bruce was a lot of fun and super easy to work with. We met him (for the first time) Friday morning at a private artists' brunch out in the countryside and got to expose him to the community we've fostered," Jennings said. "We had fun throwing the hatchets and talking shop."

Campbell shared insight and advice from his years in the film industry, donning various "hats," and discussed how technology (or lack thereof) affected his early career and affects how the industry functions now.

Campbell, recently retired after a 40-year career in TV and film, is perhaps best known for his 1981 low-budget horror film "The Evil Dead," in which he starred and co-executive produced, and its Starz network spin-off series "Ash vs. Evil Dead." Campbell is also an Oregonian; he bought ranch property in Ashland's Applegate Valley in 1998.

"We're super grateful he was willing to (speak at the festival). There were individuals (at the brunch) who were very immediately touched by the opportunity, and they won't forget that," Jennings said. "And I got to be on stage with him, which was kind of fun and weird and great. That was kind of a 'life thing' for me."

After each night's final credits rolled, festival-goers trekked back to hq for a chance to "digest the fest and ingest the best in music, community and spirits" — with music by Catskills, Healing Gems, Máscaras and Sun Blood Stories.

As the festival continues to gain notoriety, Jennings hopes some aspects of how the festival is run and Eastern Oregon's lack of representation in the film industry will shift.

"It really can't go on (solely) being the volunteer-driven thing it is. There needs to be a couple key people working on it year-round," he said. "If we really want things to change and get going around here, we have to take (bigger) steps — three or four new members or a new sponsor isn't going (to cut it)."

Along with greater financial and operational support from the City of La Grande, Chamber of Commerce and Union County Tourism, Jennings hopes connections made with filmmakers and others in the industry will draw film production to the Grande Ronde Valley. Though existing infrastructure issues pose a challenge, he hopes continued work and local investment will help provide the needed services, and perhaps incentives, for some of the Boise and Portland markets to consider Union County as an alternative.

"This is a great thing — I'm not tooting my own horn, because it's built by a lot of people — and it's been so fun to be actively helping drive it," Jennings said of EOFF. "But ultimately it comes down to how the community is responding to this, and how they're responding is awesome. (Now) the rest of the community needs to follow suit. See what we're about (for yourself). There's a film and an event for every single person, and if they can get to that one then it really opens the door."

Clark echoed similar thoughts in reflecting on this year's festival.

"I think it's important for us to always nurture the spirit and vision upon which (the festival) was founded," he said. "(To) continue to support visionary artists whose work and ideas challenge and inspire us, and ultimately bring this community together."

CLARKE

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printer and the ordering, so I'll be in on the start of a revolutionary technology."

Clarke will be a part of the professional team at Orthotic Active that will create a business model and then replicate it. For this reason, she may be asked to move to different locations within New Zealand to help set up new facilities for the company.

Orthotic Active was interested in her, Clarke said, because "they wanted someone with experience with orthotics as well as ankle foot orthoses. (They also needed) somebody who had already run their own business because they are looking for business metrics to be applied to their company."

Clarke met those qualifications, plus has the additional designation of a muscle activation specialist, which is another way to augment the assessment of the patient.

"They were intrigued to incorporate that into their business model as well," she said.

The job was posted for 12 weeks, she said, and they hadn't received anyone locally with the desired qualifications, so the company was pleased when Clarke applied with her skill sets.

"I wanted to do something different," she said. "I wanted to provide patient care and teach, (and) I'll have some new podiatry grads beneath me I'll be responsible for overseeing in the clinic, which will be fantastic."

Clarke said she looks forward to living in a different country with a multicultural environment, which includes Pacific Islanders, the indigenous Maori and the Kiwi people. In contrast to the U.S., New Zealand has a public health system, and she is eager to learn about that, too.

In addition to the new technologies she will experience, the stimulation of a new culture and a different way of life, Clarke already has leisure interests in mind to pursue in New Zealand.

"They have a lot of fish and food markets, and I want to take in the culture that way," she said. "They have great golf courses, and I'm a single-digit handicap golfer, so I'm looking forward to that."

She also wants to enjoy the biking and hiking opportunities in New Zealand. She was preparing for that here, training and putting in more than 1,200 miles a week on her bike.

"Then I fractured my humerus," she said, "so no biking or golf for the next four months."

Clarke delayed her medical exam until the first part of November, and the departure date was pushed back to the end of December to give her bone time to heal. This has given her a moment to pause and reflect on her years of solo practice in podiatry.

"I've practiced here for 22 years," she said, "and three years in Indiana prior to coming here, so I'm at my 25th year already. The years of solo practice are dwindling. I got in at the right time, and I think I got out at the right time."

Clarke said she will miss her patients and the friendships she has developed over the years, but she plans to keep in touch by posting her New Zealand adventures on social media platforms. Those wishing to keep in contact with her may leave their email addresses on the register at the farewell reception.

COVE

Continued from Page 1A

a $1.2 million proposal to convert the school district's old gym building into a multipurpose facility where lunch would be served to students.

The plan called for the school district to remove the aging locker rooms on the north side of the old gym and replace them with a kitchen and new locker room facilities and make some renovations to the gym so lunch could be served there.

Pettit said the district decided to construct a new building instead of renovating the old gym, which was built more than seven decades ago, makes better fiscal sense.

"We would have had a new kitchen in an old building," he said. "(The kitchen) would outlast the rest of the building."

The superintendent also noted unexpected problems with the building could arise while remodeling the old gym, which would increase the cost of renovation.

"You never know what you will find (when remodeling an old building)," Pettit said.

Construction of the new building could start as early as July or August of 2019 and will take about a year to complete.

"We could have a new building two years from now," Pettit said.

He emphasized this would be the quickest scenario, because the school district will approach the building project carefully.

"We are not going to rush into this. We are going to do it right the first time," he said.

This will represent the Cove School District's third construction project in the past 25 years. Two additional high school classrooms were built a decade ago, and a music room was constructed in the early 1990s.

The new cafeteria building will be about 150 feet east of the elementary school and 300 feet southeast of the high school. Pettit said it will be easily accessible to students because of a sidewalk running from the elementary school past the site of where the new building will be.

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