

And now, for something completely different...

Manzanita Film Series' Friday Night Flicks

Monthly film selections highlight the Pacific Northwest

Who doesn't love movies? We all have our favorites, including favorite characters, quotes, car chase, kiss and so on. With a never-ending supply of movies available from the multiplex on down to your phone, it's easy to be numbed by the constant barrage of vampire and superhero fare that, while wildly successful, can be a tad redundant.

For movie buffs hoping to expand their repertoire, help is just down the street in Manzanita. The Hoffman Center for the Arts' Friday Night Flicks focuses the lens of filmmaking squarely on the Pacific Northwest and taps into the passion that inspires us to love different movies for different reasons.

Part of the Hoffman Center's Manzanita Film Series, Friday Night Flicks showcases films produced in the Pacific Northwest: Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia. Selected with the help of the Northwest Film Center in Portland, each film is made by, or about, the people, values and environment of the region.

It has evolved to its current mission from a group of community film buffs who just enjoyed getting together to watch and discuss significant films. Current series organizer Dave Dillon remembers the first movie viewed was "Nosferatu," a highly influential silent horror film from the 1920s.

"We had a good turnout," he said. "People wanted to see this historic black-and-white film and talk it over. Everyone decided to make it a regular monthly thing, and it just kind of grew from there."

A rotating group of organizers continued the program, selecting a wide variety of films to share with the community and passersby.

"Jonathan Feder took it over for a while, and he had a background in film appreciation," Dillon said. "He picked some really interesting films," including an experimental Russian documentary called "Man With A Camera."

Directed by Dziga Vertov, with a variety innovative camera shots, the film follows a city in the 1920s Soviet Union during the course of a day. "It showed a lot of first use of certain techniques in cinema," Dillon said.

Friday Night Flicks soon became more than a night at the movies. As "Man With A Camera" proved, attendees are interested not only in the content of a film but how it was made. Inspiring discussion is the focal point of each showing, Dillon said. It gives viewers a chance to talk about what they liked or didn't like about each film.

"We recently showed 'Fitzcarraldo' starring Klaus Kinski," Dillon said. "Then the next month we had a movie that was about the making of 'Fitzcarraldo.'"

Though Dillon points out that one of the main objectives of the series is to show films you won't typically find in a cinema, there are occasional exceptions. "Jonathan once held a showing of 'The Goonies' during one of the anniversary years," he said.

When Dillon took the reigns of the series, he shifted concentration to films from the Northwest Film Center in Portland. Each year, the Hoffman Center gets the Film Center's best-of DVD of the previous year.

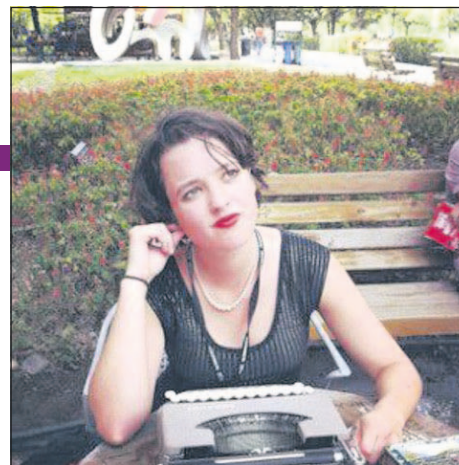
"It's like a film festival of short films, which we would always show in January," Dillon said. "We always get huge crowds. People love these short films, especially the animated ones, and they're all from the Northwest."

With the criteria of the series now centered on selections from the Northwest, attendees began to see the exceptional talent of regional filmmakers. Recent selections included "Deer Father," made by students from Montana, and "A Place Of Truth," from a Portland filmmaker.

"It has to be by somebody or about somebody from the Northwest," Dillon said.

That was no more apparent than the screening of "Politics Of Sand," a film that highlights the struggle to keep Oregon's beaches public. The fight began with Oregon Gov. Oswald West in the early 1900s and has been extremely effective, though not without effort.

"The film shows how our beaches right here were a battleground in the legislature and how fascinatingly complex it was," Dillon said.



Submitted photo

In Portland filmmaker Barrett Rudich's "A Place of Truth," 21-year-old busking poet Abi Mott taps out poetry on her typewriter that captures people's lives with stunning clarity.

Dillon said he is looking beyond a monthly screening to integrating filmmaking into Hoffman Center programs.

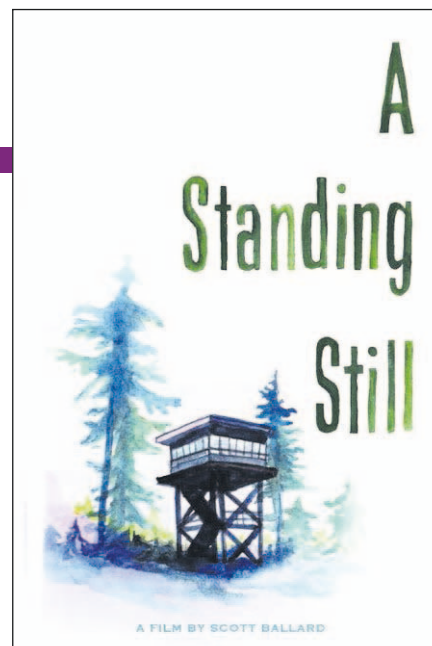
"I'd like to establish our own filmmaking program," he said. "We've have had films made in the area, going back several years." Getting people to share their stories, Dillon said, is the grand scheme for the Manzanita Film Series.

The program could be as simple as "cell phone cinema," where people can learn how to use the everyday devices to make their own films. "Audiences love to see their community on the screen," he said. "It's not just shooting pictures of the local area, you've got to tell a story."

He also added that the series' involvement with the Northwest Film Center has opened up limitless possibilities, including a "Road Show," which offers workshops in writing, filming and editing.

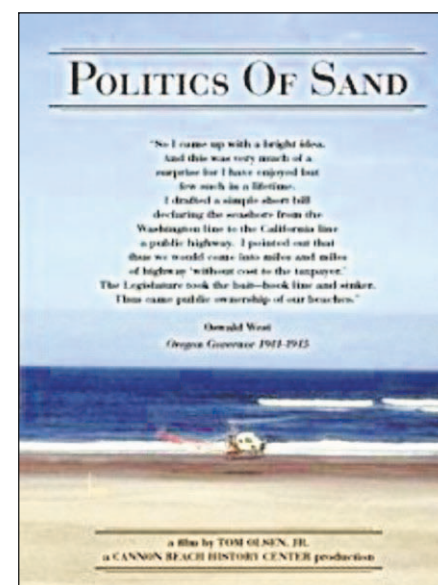
Whether it's about the love of watching a movie, discussing it with friends and strangers, or learning how to make your own film, Friday Night Flicks has something for everyone.

Dillon noted that while locals are always on hand, out-of-town visitors usually wander in when they see the marquee. "It's something new and interesting to do," he said. "And we always sell popcorn."



Submitted photo

"A Standing Still," the second feature film from Scott Ballard Films, revolves around Willamette National Forest fire lookout Allison, a young woman who struggles with the future in the midst of loss and displacement.



Submitted photo

"Politics of Sand," a 2008 film, highlights the struggle to keep Oregon's beaches public.

The Manzanita Film Series is a program of the Hoffman Center in Manzanita. Films are screened monthly throughout the year. The Hoffman Center is located at 594 Laneda Ave. For upcoming films, visit www.hoffmanblog.org

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Story by DAN HAAG