

Bohemian Film Fest screens 62 independent films

By Zach Silva
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Offering a break from the toga party, there was the Bohemian Film Festival.

Coinciding with the “Animal House” celebration, the inaugural Bohemian Film Festival showcased 62 films — ranging from two minutes to 109 minutes in length — around town from Friday through Sunday.

With the option of a weekend pass, day pass or two-hours’ worth of film-watching, over 250 people took in various show times over the course of the weekend.

“I think it actually ended up better than I expected. You know, my worst nightmare was having three people in the audience, one of them being the projectionist, the other being the welcome person and the other person taking the

tickets. That was my worst nightmare,” said event organizer Len Blackstone.

In the run-up to the first-year festival, there were 183 film sub-

The festival had a number of challenges into becoming a reality but the biggest hurdle in their way was time.

“We just pulled this off in three

trying to get this thing together.”

There was a moment — and more accurately, multiple moments — when he was unsure if putting on the festival was such a good idea.

“I literally remember like three days after (deciding to do it) telling my wife, ‘What am I thinking? Do you think I can pull this off? We’re going to pull this off? This is crazy.’ And we did, we pulled it off,” said Blackstone.

In addition to wanting to create an annual event and bring in business to the area the Cottage Grove resident of 33 years was driven to provide something enjoyable for the place that he calls home.

“When you love something so much and you’re able to share that — there’s not much more in life more fulfilling than something that you love. And I love this town,” he said.

The event itself was able to make

it through any hiccups along the way including a moment of panic when no one could get the projector at the Opal Theater to operate. After 15 minutes of a delay and giving everyone in the room a personal apology, Blackstone dashed home to grab a personal projector, speakers and cords to make sure that the show went on.

“And halfway up the road, my daughter calls me and says, ‘Hey dad, we just discovered there was a switch that someone had accidentally turned off. We covered it in tape. Everything is going to be fine,’” said Blackstone.

Mixing around ideas for the next festival, Blackstone is hoping to have next year’s event in September of 2019.

To provide feedback for the event, Blackstone can be reached at info@bohemianfestival.com.

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— Len Blackstone, event organizer

missions from 28 countries. The winner for best film of the festival and the \$3,000 grand prize was awarded to “Big Sonia,” which was directed by Leah Warshawski. The film is about a holocaust survivor and looks at what that means and the generational impacts it has.

months and keep in mind this is three months from zero. We had no name, no domain site. We hadn’t figured out the categories, we hadn’t figured out the criteria for judging,” said Blackstone. “So I mean it was unbelievable. Long weekends and nights, stuff like that

Elkton to host annual Fort Umpqua Days

Interested in a weekend full of fun activities, good food, live music, and reenactors at historical Fort Umpqua? Elkton is holding its annual Fort Umpqua Days celebration Sept. 1 and 2.

Most activities will take place at the Elkton Community Education Center (ECEC), located just west of town at 15850 Highway 38.

A parade through town on River Road kicks off the event at 10 a.m. that Saturday morning.

A two-day bass tournament launches Saturday and Sunday morning at 6 a.m., with weigh-in and awards on Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m.

The Elkton Lion’s Club

will serve a pancake breakfast starting at 7 a.m. each day on the ECEC Greenhouse Patio.

In addition, a barbecue lunch will be provided by the Elkton Baptist Church from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Saturday, there will be live music starting at 11 a.m. featuring The Slow Ponies, the popular six-woman “cow-girl band,” followed by the highly-anticipated auction of more than 50 homemade pies at 1 p.m.

‘Sunday’s lunch features live music by Old Time Fiddlers.

ECEC’s reconstruction of historic Fort Umpqua, the festival’s namesake, will be filled with activities and demonstrations throughout

the weekend depicting life at a Hudson’s Bay Company fur trading post. ‘Re-enactors in costume portray characters from the mid-1800s. Kids and adults alike can take part in historic themed activities at the Fort.

Both afternoons wrap up with the 14th season of the “Echoes of the Umpqua” musical pageant. Each year local residents write and perform a rousing and entertaining play that offers a glimpse into Elkton’s history.

This year’s production tells the story of the historic journey of the stern wheeler SWAN as it navigated the Umpqua River in 1869. Performances are held at the ECEC Amphitheater, at 5 p.m.

Saturday’s pageant will be followed by a chuck wagon dinner at 6 p.m., provided by Brandborg Winery.

Diners and festival attendees can stay and enjoy live music by Contra Swing, a fiddling and guitar playing duo from Coos Bay.

All weekend, guests can enjoy craft and food booths, a native plant nursery, locally grown produce, a display of art quilts by Elkton Quilters, the ECEC gift shop, Outpost Café, an ice cream social, antique bike display and more.

Guests can also visit the Butterfly Pavilion to “adopt” a Monarch butterfly before releasing it to begin its fall migration.

ECEC is a nonprofit organization founded to provide cultural, educational and social activities to participants of all ages.

For more information, please call 541-584-2692, email in-fo @elktonbutterflies.com or visit www.elktonbutterflies.com.

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