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MOVIES & SHOWTIMES

‘The Last Blockbuster’ is a delightful nostalgia trip

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE

The Bulletin

We're lucky in Bend. We've never seen a time since the early years of video rentals where we've not had an option to rent something obscure, new or a familiar favorite on a Friday night. That's the rest of the world's loss.

Famously, our local Blockbuster video on Revere Avenue is the last of its kind, standing resolutely in its iconic blue and yellow.

In local filmmaker Taylor Morden's and writer Zeke Kamm's latest documentary, "The Last Blockbuster," they remind us of the joy renting a movie can bring, introduce us to the beating heart behind the stalwart store's resilience and give some insight as to why our little store that could has lasted this long.

The film hangs hard on the nostalgia factor and that viewers probably still have their old Blockbuster card floating around in a drawer somewhere. But they do it well, blending those pangs with the work that general manager of the Bend Blockbuster Sandi Harding puts in to ensure the store can still run, including repairing old, out-of-date computers because they're the only machines the store's software can run on.

We also get a plethora of stories from actors, comedians and directors, including Brian Posehn, Doug Benson, Paul Scheer, Lloyd Kaufman and Kevin Smith, as well as those on the business side of the Blockbuster phenomenon, walking through just what



Popmotion pictures

Sandi Harding and her family during a virtual interview as seen in "The Last Blockbuster."

happened to the company.

Morden and Kamm weave the rise and fall of the corporate structure in with the whole story of the Bend store from its beginnings as a Pacific Video to becoming a franchisee carrying the Blockbuster name (as a Bend kid, I was thrilled at the mention).

They also throw in some cute imagery like stick puppets, actual puppets and Drunk History-esque reenactments to help move the story along, introduce the big players and keep the feeling light.

But the real bright spot of the documen-

tary lies in two people: Harding and Jared Rasic.

Rasic, the movie critic for The Source, gives his memories of going to rent movies just like all the other actors, comedians and directors that were interviewed as part of the documentary, but his recollections are more effervescent than the rest.

Now, full disclosure, I know Rasic and know he is a wonderful human being and a delight to be around, so it is entirely possible that my admiration for his story in "The Last Blockbuster" stems from that, but I

More Information

"The Last Blockbuster"

84 minutes

No MPAA rating



don't think so.

Rasic's joy at recalling how he can make one turn from his house, walk down Revere Avenue a few blocks and go rent a movie is infectious.

His, along with Doug Benson's segments, are highlights around the overall heart of the story.

And that heart is Harding.

She calls herself the "Blockbuster mom" throughout, and we can easily see why. Her kindness and positivity to her employees and customers shines through any cynicism one might have about any kind of tip to a corporate hand.

She and her staff clearly love what they do and have a great affection for each other, too.

In the end, "The Last Blockbuster" is a delightful story that everyone who has ever rented a movie can relate to, can feel for and brings every one of us back to those nights that were made by Blockbuster.

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Movie note

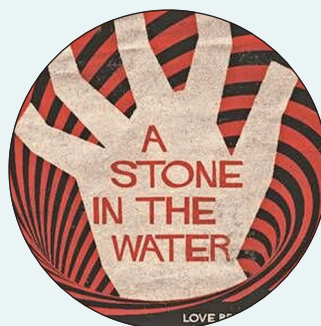
Locally made 'A Stone in the Water' available to stream

If you still can't get enough locally made films, Bend writer-director Dan Cohen has just the thing.

His 2019 thriller "A Stone in the Water" is now available to rent and stream online through Am-

azon, Vimeo, FandangoNow, Hoopla, iTunes, Google Play, XBOX and Playstation stores as well as most cable on demand channels like Comcast, Charter and Blue Ridge.

The film starring Bonnie Bedelia of "Die Hard" fame and



Melissa Fumero of "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" fame also features a few local faces including Ryan Klontz, Kimberly Lee-mans, Michael Coffman, Mary Kilpatrick and David DaCosta.

The film centers around two women who, producer Howard

Schor described in a December 2019 interview, "couldn't be more different. One has lived on a farm her whole life in, like, rural Oregon...(Fumero) is a younger woman who's almost kind of a drifter. She works in a bar, she dates this crook. ... They come together at the farm by happenstance."

— Makenzie Whittle, The Bulletin