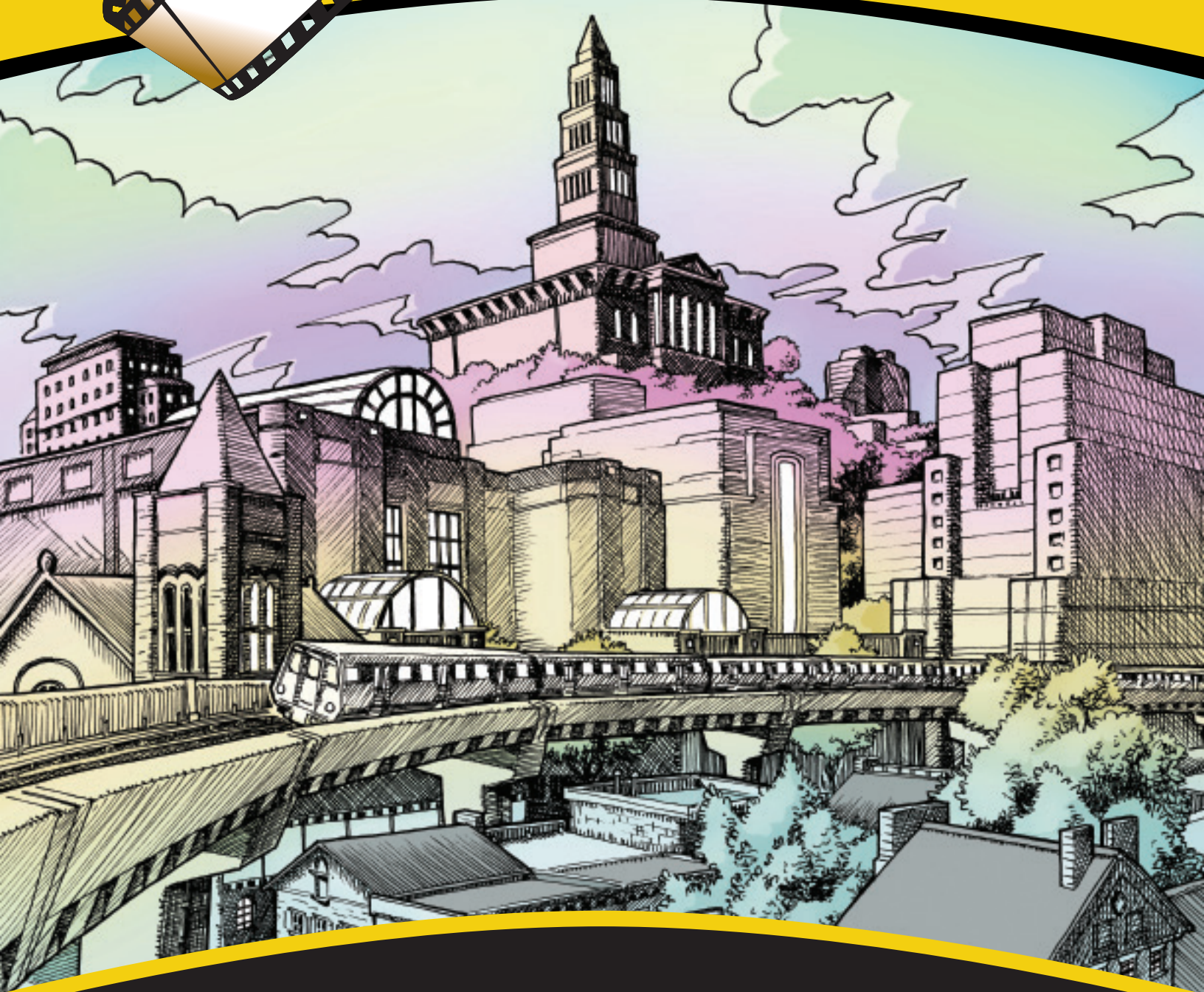


2020 Alexandria Film Festival



NOVEMBER 12-15

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**LIGHTS
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SAVE!**

Welcome to the 2020 Alexandria Film Festival!



A warm welcome to all film buffs, art lovers, and storytellers to our yearly celebration of cinematic arts and ideas. And what a year it's been! The AFF 2020 is now fully virtual on the platform, Eventive, with filmmaker Q&As on Zoom links. We have had to be quick studies in the technology of presenting a film festival in the Age of COVID, and we are grateful to our nimble Board and trusted advisors for getting the planning right to present a festival of 40 films from around the world. We continue to be so proud of our program, which connects the best of local filmmaking with the global reach we have worked hard to cultivate. Now, as a fully online event, the Alexandria Film Festival can travel even farther to film lovers around the globe. Thank you for joining us!

We will miss the in-person screenings, but there are many upsides! Once you purchase a ticket, you will have two weeks to watch your showcase online. Once you click "play" you have three days to finish watching it. Get an all-fest pass and you can watch every film—no having to choose between theaters screening films simultaneously! And we have more Q&As with filmmakers than ever.

Our opening night commemorates the 100th Anniversary of women's suffrage as we screen Oscar award-winning filmmakers' Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar's film "9to5: the Story of a Movement," which tells the story of a group of office workers who organized to change labor conditions in the 1970's. And we welcome producers Katie Gardener and Rosemary Smith for a screening of "Trust Me," a film documenting the current woeful state of American media literacy, with interactive Q&A to follow. We continue to offer cost-free programming to active and retired military service personnel with our Veterans' Showcases as well as welcoming AFF Alumni filmmakers Michael Fallavollita, Sam Hampton, Aaron Hose, Alexi Scheiber, Jane Pittman, Mike Kravinsky, and Austin and Meredith Bragg with their amazing short films.

We are honored to partner with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra to create a series of original films set to American music presented here, for the first time, at the Alexandria Film Festival! We are grateful for the leadership of Maestro James Ross for setting the musical stage that our AFF filmmakers populated with visual imagery. We look forward to when the ASO can perform the scores live in 2021.

We are grateful for our new Box Office Sponsor, Sunrise Senior Living Old Town, as well as our long-time friends, Burke and Herbert Bank, the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, Visit Alexandria, Wilson Grand Communications, and Alexandria Hyundai. Thank you for continuing to support art and film in Alexandria.

Finally, we especially thank our audiences and volunteers for making possible our 14th year of "Celebrating Independents." Thank you all and we hope you enjoy the show!

Margaret

Margaret Wohler
Chair

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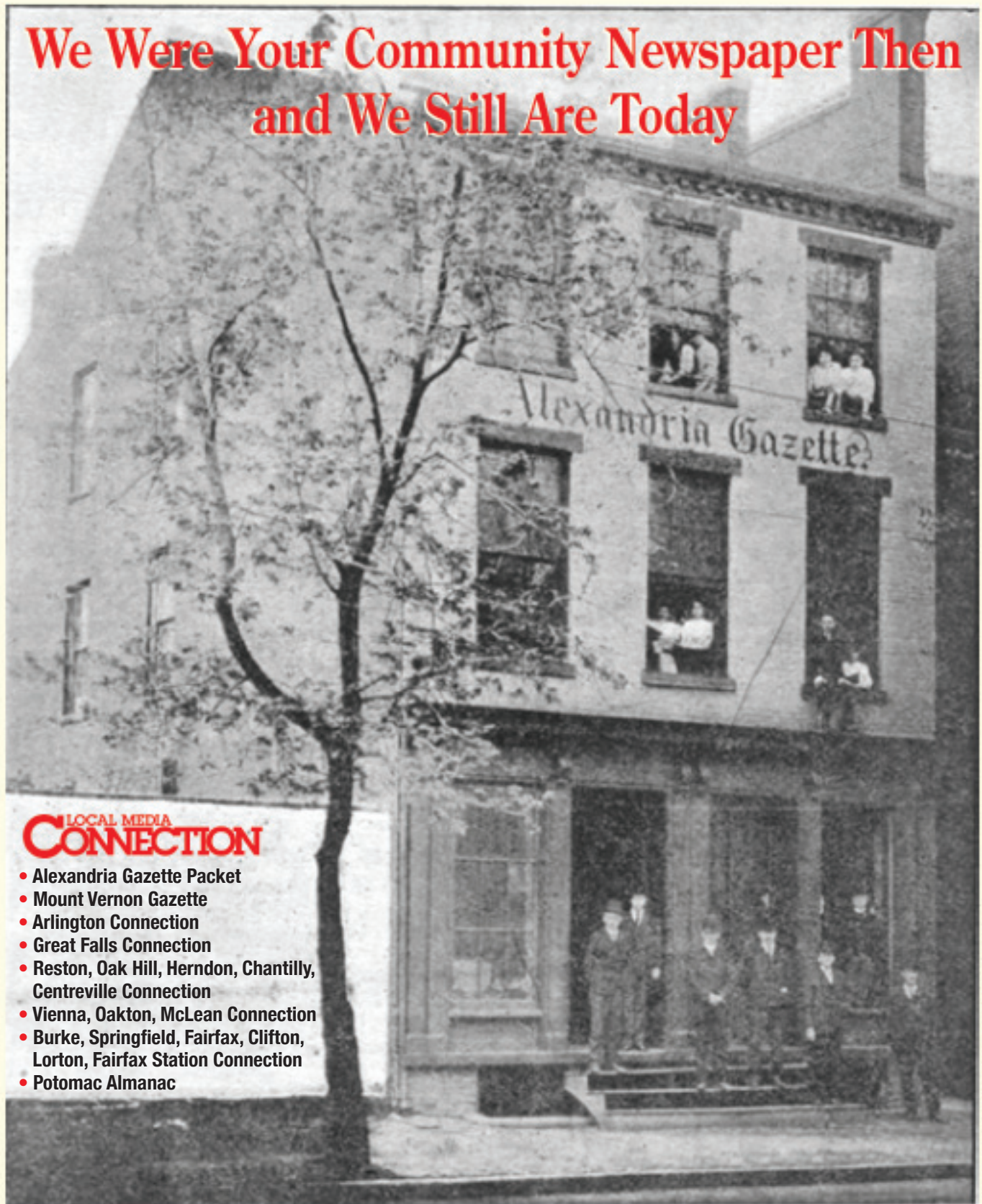


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The Alexandria Gazette was established in 1784. This Alexandria Gazette building was located at 317 King Street. Today that space is part of the block that houses Alexandria Market Square and City Hall.

Alexandria Gazette Packet

For more information, call: 703-778-9431
www.AlexandriaGazette.com
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Alexandria Film Festival

2020 FESTIVAL PROGRAM

OPENING NIGHT SPOTLIGHT MOVIE

Lila Meade Valentine and AFF alumnae filmmaker, 15-year old, tenth grader, Julia Hocker.

Q&A: Filmmaker Julia Hocker

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Showcase

9 TO 5: THE STORY OF A MOVEMENT

Filmmakers: Julia Reichert & Steven Bognar

85 minutes, USA

A group of office workers organize to change labor conditions in the 1970s. The Hollywood comedy "9 to 5, starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton" was based in part on this story. Appearance by Jane Fonda meeting with the activists. Filmmakers won the Best Documentary Oscar in 2019 for their last film "American Factory," produced by Barack and Michelle Obama's company Higher Ground..

Q&A: Subject Debbie Schneider

LILA MEADE VALENTINE: THE STORY OF A VIRGINIAN SUFFRAGIST

Filmmaker: Julia Hocker

5 minutes, USA

WORLD PREMIERE

The battle for the 19th Amendment told from the perspective of two daughters of the Commonwealth:

THE HOUSATONIC AT STOCKBRIDGE

Filmmaker: Tim McLoraine

5 minutes, USA, Sneak Preview

Charles Ives' composition, The Housatonic at Stockbridge, was inspired by a walk he took with his new wife, Harmony, in June of 1908 during a honeymoon hiking trip in western Massachusetts. The accompanying film imagines Ives on the riverbank that day immersed in the reverie of nature and this joyful time of his life. As he peers into the water, he thinks about the events leading up to this moment and imagines the possibilities of the future. What he hears around him provides a soundtrack for the visions within him which seem to be visible in the river as it flows on by. This is a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with score performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Tim McLoraine

ROE VS. WADE

Filmmaker: Ann Hartley

21 Minutes, USA

With Roe vs. Wade potentially back in play under a more conservative Supreme Court, this documentary focuses on the legal underpinnings of the decision. Until now, this aspect of the debate has been largely absent from public discourse. How might "originalism" impact the court's consideration of Roe? Will the Constitutional right to privacy survive?

Q&A: Filmmakers Ann Hartley and Samantha Shroeder



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What is Truth? Showcase

TRUST ME

Filmmaker: Roko Belic

90 minutes, USA

D.C. PREMIERE

Directed by Oscar nominated Roko Belic, the film shows how an avalanche of negative news and mis-information is creating a wide gap between the perceived state of the world and reality. How do we know who and what we can trust?

Q&A: Director Roko Belic, executive producer Joe Phelps, and Editor Michael Fallavollita

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Human Interest Showcase

SCATTERING C.J.

Filmmaker: Andrea Kalin

63 minutes, USA

D.C. PREMIERE

When Air Force recruit C.J. Twomey took his life at age 20, his mother, Hallie put out an open call on Facebook asking a handful of world travelers to help fulfill her son's ambition to see all the corners of the Earth by scattering some of his ashes in a place of beauty or special meaning to them. It was a call that would resonate beyond her wildest hopes—one that would move tens of thousands of people to answer.

Q&A: Filmmaker Andrea Kalin and Subject Hallie Twomey

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Sunrise Senior Living Old Town Showcase

12 INGREDIENTS OVER A GENERATION

Filmmaker: Sam Hampton

13 minutes, USA

A filmmaker bakes a sweet potato pie with his daughter and reflects on its significance--simultaneously simple and profound—to generations of his family members..

Q&A: Filmmaker Sam Hampton

POWER

Filmmaker: Chris Foito

12 minutes, USA

VIRGINIA PREMIERE

A mother tries to reconnect with her son across memories, missed calls, modern distractions, and the distance of neglected relationships.

Q&A: Filmmaker Chris Foito

KITE

Filmmaker: Michael Fallavolita

10 minutes, USA

SNEAK PREVIEW

A kite sparks a boy's love of flying and a magical bond with his grandfather. This is a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with the score "Blue Cathedral" composed by Jennifer Higdon performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Michael Fallavolita

LEAVE A MESSAGE

Filmmaker: David Malouf

16 minutes, USA

WORLD PREMIERE

Herb would be in a lot of trouble if he weren't already dead. His family has found romantic messages from a strange woman on his answering machine!

Q&A: Filmmaker David Malouf; Producer Patty Meyers; Composer Mark Haag

The Alexandria Film Festival
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KINDRED SPIRITS: ARTISTS HILDA WILKINSON BROWN AND LILIAN THOMAS BURWELL

Filmmaker: Cintia Cabib

26 minutes, USA

"Kindred Spirits" explores the lives and work of two accomplished but unsung African American women artists who lived and worked in D.C. during the era of segregation and who developed a special bond as aunt and niece.

Q&A: Filmmaker Cintia Cabib and subject Lilian Thomas Burwell

LEGACY SESSIONS

Filmmaker: William D. Ashton

36 minutes, USA

A troubled high school student forms an unlikely friendship with a woman in a retirement community.

Q&A: Filmmaker David Ashton and Actor Julie Kashmanian

DANCING IS AN OLD FRIEND

Filmmaker: Marta Renzi

11 minutes, USA

Two old friends reconnect virtually. One still dances professionally, the other only for pleasure. Like their friendship, their dancing manages to transcend time and distance.

Q&A: Choreographers Jenny Tortorello Walker, Leah Barsky

Salute to Service Members Showcase I

WE SHALL NOT DIE NOW

Filmmaker: Ashton Gleckman

100 minutes, USA

A chronicle of the Holocaust, exploring stories of survival, tragedy, hope, and resilience through one of history's darkest chapters.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

AFF 2020

Burke & Herbert Bank Family Showcase

THE SAVINGS GENIE

Filmmaker: Sujay Khona

1.5 minutes, USA

2nd place winner in the American Bankers Association "Lights, Camera, Save" video contest.

Q&A: Filmmaker Sujay Khona

BIRD'S EYE

Filmmaker: Mike Kravinsky

14 minutes, USA

How do we appear in the eyes of our pets? This touching film follows the journey of a bird who has lost its owner through tragedy and experiences both the bad and the good sides of human nature.

Q&A: Filmmakers, Mike Kravinsky, Lisa Kravinsky, Producer Sali Diamond, DP Zhibo Lai; and Actors Joan Darling, Mike Shifflet, and Anna Fagan

TELL ME ABOUT ORANGE

Filmmaker: Robin Noonan-Price

6 minutes, USA

When his best friend expresses her romantic feelings, a blind teenage boy struggles to express his. He realizes that sometimes love really is blind.

Q&A: Filmmaker Robin Noonan-Price

AMONG THE CLOUDS

Filmmaker: Alexi Scheiber

4 minutes, USA

SNEAK PREVIEW

In this experimental stop-motion animation, a cardinal explores beautiful skylines and struggles to make his way back home. Showcasing a cast of state birds and a deep appreciation for nature, this film is set to Charles Tomlinson Griffes's "Clouds." This is a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with score performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Alexi Scheiber

KITE

Filmmaker: Michael Fallavollita

11 minutes, USA

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36 minutes, USA

A troubled high school student forms an unlikely friendship with a woman in a retirement community.

Q&A: Filmmaker David Ashton and Actor Julie Kashmanian

THE FIRST NOELLE

Filmmaker: Wendy Faraone

16 minutes, USA

A latter day Scrooge tries to escape the holiday season with a trip to a charming inn overseas and is upset that she did not get what she thought she was paying for.

Q&A: Filmmakers Wendy Faraone and Elizabeth Mihelich



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PIECE OF CAKE

Filmmakers: Austin and Meredith Bragg
 12 minutes, USA

Trying to transform his "Dad promise" into a real one, by fulfilling his daughter's seemingly simple birthday wish, a father suffers through a hilarious, Kafkaesque journey that satirizes a world of well-intended rules seeking to micromanage our everyday lives.

Q&A: Co-writers/co-directors Austin and Meredith Bragg

12 INGREDIENTS OVER A GENERATION

Filmmaker: Sam Hampton
 13 minutes, USA

A filmmaker bakes a sweet potato pie with his daughter and reflects on its significance--simultaneously simple and profound—to generations of his family members.

Q&A: Filmmaker Sam Hampton

Historical Showcase


BEAT THE MACHINE

Filmmaker: Shannon Washington
 7 minutes, USA

SNEAK PREVIEW


Docu-fiction about a young girl surrounded by a world of adversity who stumbles upon a magical crown that transports her to another dimension. It is through this journey that she learns from those who came before her, and unlocks her own strength to face the world. Set to the music of Aaron Copland's John Henry: A Railroad Ballad for Orchestra, a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with score performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Shannon Washington



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BALLAD OF JOHN HENRY

Filmmaker: Matt Rice

50 minutes, USA

VIRGINIA PREMIERE

Most of us are aware of the John Henry legend. But if you assumed his story was nothing more than a tall tale, you will be enlightened by this documentary exploring the real John Henry and his exploitation as a prisoner in Virginia in the years immediately following the end of slavery.

Q&A: Filmmaker Matt Rice

SERVITUDE

Filmmaker: Renato Barbieri

72 minutes, Brazil

VIRGINIA PREMIERE

This Brazilian documentary includes disturbing footage that makes the point that even in today's world slavery can exist if laws are not being adequately enforced.

Q&A: Filmmaker, Renato Barbieri

Personal Stories Showcase

GURU NANAK: THE FOUNDER OF SIKHISM

Filmmakers: Gerald and Adam Krell

85 minutes, USA

Guru Nanak is a 15th century teacher, poet, and revolutionary activist, whose ideas: the oneness of God, equality for all, women's empowerment, service to others, and devotion to nature and the environment, were well ahead of his time.

Q&A: Filmmakers Gerald and Adam Krell

ARCHIE: AN AMERICAN JOURNEY

Filmmaker: John Sullivan

28 minutes, USA

How an individual's vision, energy and tenacity can transform an institution into a powerful force in peoples' lives. This is an inspiring documentary about Archie Avedisian, Executive Director of the Greater Washington Boys and Girls Clubs from 1972 to 1998, including individual stories of lives changed forever by his pioneering efforts.

Q&A: Filmmaker John Sullivan

FILM: "FINDING MANNY"

Filmmaker: Kacey Cox

57 minutes, Canada

The chance discovery of an online article sends Manny Drukier, a Holocaust survivor, and his entire family, on an unexpected trip to visit the places of his youth, including the orphanage that rescued him after the war.

Q&A: Filmmaker Kacey Cox, Producer Jan Jekielek, and Subject Cindy Drukier (LIVE)

Girl Power Showcase

HER NAME WAS JO

Filmmaker: Joe Duca

99 minutes, USA

VIRGINIA PREMIERE

Ten-year-old Jo spends her days along the Shenandoah River with her best friend Selma, fishing, scrapping for metal—surviving. But when her abusive junkie step father dies, Jo decides, Selma in tow, to dump the body, steal the car, and set off across the country in search of her real dad, a legendary folk singer in Los Angeles. One judge described it as 'Thelma and Louise' meets 'Beasts of the Southern Wild.'

Q&A: Filmmaker Joe Duca



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ALL THE RAGE

Filmmaker: Dana El-Issa

13 minutes, USA

WORLD PREMIERE

Above a busy D.C. street, a group of women are learning to fight. Aggressive and unapologetic, Colleen, the group's leader, inspires her students to get angry, get strong, and get comfortable in their own power. The film follows these women as they learn to harness their own strength, struggling against social norms and experiences that have made them feel powerless.

Q&A: Filmmaker Dana El-Issa, Editor/Sound Stefanie Smith; Kate Midden and Colleen Daly, and subjects

NIGHTLIFE

Filmmaker: Rebecca Rice

9 minutes, USA

Hannah and her husband are fighting violently outside Evie's apartment door. When she hears Hannah being slammed against the door, Evie pulls her inside to rescue her. But does Hannah need or want help?

Q&A: Filmmakers Angela Wilson and Rebecca Rice; and Actors Holly Adams and Carl Saverin

Political Showcase

ME THE PEOPLE

Filmmakers: Dan Shannon and Isabelle Depelteau

76 Minutes, Canada

D.C. PREMIERE

Explores how elected leaders of western countries increasingly use wedge politics on key divisive issues, giving rise to a new kind of populist leader. They are disruptors with a new playbook. But are they also expressing the will of the people?

Q&A: Filmmakers Isabelle Depelteau and Dan Shannon (LIVE)

BEAT THE MACHINE

Filmmaker: Shannon Washington

7 minutes, USA, Sneak Preview

A docu-fiction about a young girl surrounded in a world of adversity who stumbles upon a magical crown that transports her to another dimension. It is through this journey that she learns from those who came before her, and unlocks her own strength to face the world. Set to the music of Aaron Copland's John Henry: A Railroad Ballad for Orchestra, it is a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with score performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Shannon Washington

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Salute to Service Members Showcase II

VETERANS JOURNEY HOME: KALANI'S STORY

Filmmaker: Frederick Marx

30 minutes, USA

American veterans struggle to transition back to civilian life with PTSD, addiction, and suicide rates much higher than the general population. Soldiers returning home need "reverse boot camp." This film focuses on these new brands of American bravery: the courage to face anguish and loss, fear and rage, paralyzing self-doubt, shame, and even self-hatred. It highlights the best people, practices, and programs doing the work necessary to support vets in accomplishing this healing.



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BACK FROM THE BRINK

Filmmakers: Dustin Jones and Emma Pettinga
33 minutes, USA

D.C. PREMIERE

Marine Corps veteran and filmmaker Dustin Jones sets out to understand the suicide epidemic among veterans through the lens of his former comrade, Bill Kirner. Bill's marriage and life are threatened by PTSD. After intensive treatment, he and his wife Ashley are starting over.

PLAY NICE

Filmmaker: Matt Blackerby
5 minutes, USA

WORLD PREMIERE

Two would-be muggers meet in an alley. Will either prevail before a third decisively weighs in?

Q&A: Filmmakers Matt Blackerby and Amanda Ghobadi

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Local Shorts Showcase

AN AMERICAN SCENE: BLACK LIVES MATTER

4 minutes, USA, Sneak Preview

Filmmakers: Jane Pittman & Annette Brieger,
animation by Julia Hocker

The U Street Corridor in the nation's capital has been many things—Black Broadway, the heart of black culture in Washington, an innovator, an incubator, a slum. This film captures the highlights and low points of this historic Washington district over the last century. Set to the Music of the African American composer William Grant Still, the film is a collage of photographs and video footage that documents the people and places that made the U Street corridor what it was and is today. This is a sneak preview of the film that will be screened in November 2021, with score performed live by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Q&A: Filmmaker Jane Pittman

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- Patti North

Executive Director



PIECE OF CAKE

Filmmakers: Austin and Meredith Bragg

12 minutes, USA

Trying to transform his "Dad promise" into a real one by fulfilling his daughter's seemingly simple birthday wish, a father suffers through a hilarious Kafkaesque journey that satirizes a world of well-intended rules seeking to micromanage our everyday lives.

Q&A: Filmmakers Austin and Meredith Bragg

BIRD'S EYE

Filmmaker: Mike Kravinsky

14 minutes, USA

How do we appear in the eyes of our pets? This touching film follows the journey of a bird who has lost its

owner through tragedy and experiences both the bad and the good sides of human nature.

Q&A: Filmmakers Mike Kravinsky, Lisa Kravinsky, Producer Sali Diamond; DP Zhibo Lai, and Actors Joan Darling, Mike Shifflet, Anna Fagan

POWER

Filmmaker: Chris Foito

12 minutes, USA

VIRGINIA PREMIERE

A mother tries to reconnect with her son across memories, missed calls, modern distractions, and the distance of neglected relationships.

Q&A: Filmmaker Chris Foito

DIGNITY

Filmmaker: Pat Battistini

22 minutes, USA

EAST COAST PREMIERE

When a woman makes a fateful decision that tests the family bonds it threatens to tear them apart.

Q&A: Filmmaker Pat Battistini and Actor Millie Langford

SAVING ROBIN WILLIAMS

Filmmaker: Lawrence Whitener

25 minutes, USA

An astounding performance by actor Roger Kabler channeling the last minutes of the life of legendary comedian and actor Robin Williams.

Q&A: Filmmaker Lawrence Whitener; Actor Roger Kabler

BLUEBIRDS OF ANTIETAM

Filmmaker: Conrad Weaver

23 minutes, USA

WORLD PREMIERE

After spotting a bluebird outside their cabin located near the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland, Mark Raabe (of Alexandria, VA) and his late wife, Jean Raabe built bluebird boxes on their property hoping to stave off the decline in the bluebird population.

Q&A: Filmmaker Conrad Weaver; Producer Stefanie Boss

Foreign Features Showcase

SNOWLAND

Filmmaker: Jonni Kicoltz

88 minutes, Israel

VIRGINIA PREMIER

This moving feature from Israel follows the struggles of a father trying to restore his failed marriage as his daughter suffers the effects of cancer and chemotherapy. It includes powerful performances by the father and daughter as well as his estranged wife and best friend, who have their own challenges.

Q&A: Filmmaker Jonnie Zicoltz

ANACRONTE

Filmmaker: Raul Koler, Emiliano Sette

14 minutes, Brazil

D.C. PREMIER

This dazzling animated fantasy from Argentina examines the journey of individual souls through varying dimensions of existence. It may leave you perplexed about what it all means but it most assuredly will leave you feeling very entertained.

Special Features Showcase

ILLEGAL

Filmmaker: Nick Alexander

79 minutes, USA

D.C. PREMIER

The inspiring story of Salvadoran immigrant Laz Ayala's journey from illegal immigrant to real estate developer and philanthropist. Chronicles his path to U.S. citizenship, the challenges of present-day immigration, and his mission to humanize immigrants and reform immigration for the benefit of all.

Q&A: Filmmaker Nick Alexander

BIRD'S EYE

Filmmaker: Mike Kravinsky

14 minutes, USA

How do we appear in the eyes of our pets? This touching film follows the journey of a bird who has lost its owner through tragedy and experiences both the bad and the good sides of human nature.

Q&A: Filmmakers Mike Kravinsky, Lisa Kravinsky; Producer Sali Diamond; DP Zhibo Lai; and Actors Joan Darling, Mike Shifflet, and Anna Fagan

THE BREWCHURCH

Filmmaker: Aaron Hose

9 minutes, USA

D.C. PREMIER

Castle Church Brewing Community, America's first modern-day church-owned brewery, is reintroducing the age-old concept of combining faith-based fellowship and beer under the same roof. Patrons from all walks of life are welcome to grab a pint, join in on a prayer, or both.

Q&A: Filmmaker Aaron Hose

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We greatly appreciate the support of our individual donors!

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