

## Movies

Cont'd from Page 28

### Smaller can be better

Like The Plaza Theatre, the venue itself can be part of the experience.

Mesilla Valley Film Society board member Jeff Berg said that the Fountain Theatre in the historic Mesilla, N.M., is a world apart from the standard moviegoing experience. The 106-year-old historic movie house offers documentaries, art films, foreign films, and other films that don't usually make it to El Paso's mainstream cinemas. It presents an atmosphere absent of what Berg lists as common movie distractions: texters, unruly children (and adults) and dirty conditions.

A society member or special invited guest introduces each film. Patrons can sit either in traditional movie aisles or at one of a few tables in the back and enjoy a more coffeehouse-style experience.

"There is no comparison to what we show and to what every other full-time film venue for over 200 square miles shows," Berg said. "We are an all-volunteer organization and this is our 21st year of operation."

Berg said that it can be a challenge to introduce local residents to the theater.

"The Mesilla Valley Film Society more or less requires one to have a change of attitude about movies," he said. "The films we show are of course, in some sense, about entertainment, but oftentimes they are selected to show our patrons that film is a form of art as well as a way to forget your troubles for two hours."

UTEP's Union Cinema, home of the Cinema Novo Art and Foreign Film Series that runs through the school year, is the university's own on-campus source of non-mainstream motion pictures. In addition to its regular showings, the UTEP theater has presented a grab bag of special-interest series, including the annual We Will Rock You music-film series, the French Film Festival, The Sun City Film Fest (local independent-film showcase) and more.

An entirely different movie experience is in the area's only IMAX movie screen, at the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo. The Tombaugh IMAX Dome Theater and Planetarium now offers combo packages allowing museum guests to view selected films with their museum admission.

On a smaller scale, the Fellini Film Café in Kern Place hosts films on selected nights for free with a minimum coffee shop purchase, and the new Travel Mug Coffee café features free movie nights.

### Film series with purpose

People with particular opinions, outlooks or lifestyles often want to see films they can enjoy and discuss with others of the same interests. Several organizations in El Paso offer monthly film series or annual film fests that cater to a specific group as well as open the minds of others through the familiar art form of film.

The series range from cultural interests to films that raise social consciousness on current issues, all in settings appealing to the audiences.

In 2008, the El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center began a summer film series, Cinema Sundays, screening Holocaust-related films. The series was so

popular it was expanded to a year-round series the next year.

Museum Executive Director Mirabel Villalva said that the series has an intimate crowd of about 30 to 40 viewers each month, and the selections often include some well-known films.

"Films range from new releases to older films, all dealing with the Holocaust or themes associated with the Holocaust," Villalva said. "Recent films have included 'The Boy in the Striped Pajamas,' 'Defiance,' 'The Reader,' 'Enemies: A Love Story,' 'Triumph of the Will' and 'Blessed is the Match.'"

Other cultural or ethnic-centered series held locally have included the Jewish Arthouse Film Series at UTEP's Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center of Fine Arts and French-language films held monthly by L'Alliance Française d'El Paso, and the El Paso Museum of Art and Mexican Consulate have both sponsored some of the best of Spanish-language films.

A recent addition is Rio Grande Adelante Inc.'s semimonthly Queer Cinema and its annual Frontera Pride Film Festival at Fellini Film Café in the Cincinnati entertainment district.

Rio Grande Adelante Program Development Chair Danny Steel said that the films are set to appeal to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) audience and draw around 15 to 20 viewers each screening.

"All of the films will be with a queer theme, queer following, starring queer actors or directed by an LGBT individual," he said.

Chamizal National Memorial has featured several topic-specific series, including its First Friday series, featuring films about El Paso or border issues; a nature-film series; and Hot Topic, a current-events series focusing on discussion-provoking themes.

Themes of peace and justice are the focus of the Pax Christi Film Series, sponsored by Pax Christi El Paso and the Peace and Justice Ministry of the El Paso Catholic Diocese. The series is held at the Mother Teresa Center the second Sunday of the month.

Film committee member Wayne Daniel said that the audience averages around 25 people, but certain topics or films draw larger crowds.

"Attendance varies greatly," he said. "About 60 people came to see 'Soul Searching: The Journey of Thomas Merton.' A film about Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, and Al Gore's film, 'An Inconvenient Truth,' also attracted larger-than-usual crowds."

The series coordinator, Father Ed Carpenter, said that each film is intended to provide "choice" to the audience concerning various issues, such as world peace, black history, women's history, the environment, labor, war, the judicial system, Hispanic history, domestic violence, respect for life, political responsibility, veterans and more. The August film featured is "Hiroshima: Repentance and Renewal," with future films this year being "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price" and "Advent Conspiracy."

The series is offered free, although donations to the ministry are always welcome.

Committee member Sister Ida R. Berresheim said that it is often hard to find films about topics on peace and justice in traditional movie venues, and films or documentaries of these types either spend a very brief time in local theaters or are never even shown.

### Filmmakers emerging

The rising interest in film series and festivals continues to be fed by a rising awareness of El Paso's multifaceted community filmmakers.

Carlos Corral keeps busy with his and his brother, Octavio's, production company, MindWarp Entertainment, as well as helping other area filmmakers with their own work. He wrote and directed the 2010 award-winning film "Hands of God," as well as "Santos" and "Torture Corn," and has served as producer, actor, sound editor, cinematographer and editor for several others.

One of his most recent efforts, "Red Sands," completed filming in June using all local on-screen talent and film crews. "All of the actors here in El Paso are ready and willing to be in films," he said. "I think one of the problems here is people think they have to go somewhere else to find work or talent, but the people are here to make it work."

Corral, who shot "Hands of God" in El Paso, spent time as both a student and professional filmmaker in Austin, a city with a very visual film community.

Since returning to El Paso, Corral said, the filmmaking scene in El Paso at first seemed kind of dry, but upon networking and asking around about potential crew members, he has found several individuals willing to work and gain experience in all aspects of the moviemaking art form.

"There's a whole network here," he said. "You just have to know where to find them."

One of the best sources he discovered is a film database site, epfilm.com, maintained by filmmaker Gilbert Chavarria. This network of local individuals both looking for cast and crew or for movies to work with has helped Corral and other filmmakers find worthy talent.

"Thanks to that site, I was able to make two movies," Corral said.

He said that the biggest problem is making people aware of not only the products coming from El Paso's film community, but also of the amount of talent to be found in the area's film culture, which often goes unnoticed.

UTEP senior Christopher Velasquez said that he is using an almost exclusive El Paso cast and crew for his current independent film on immigration.

"I am proud to say that the entire cast and

Please see Page 30

phoenix dawn massage  
by rubyann l.m.t  
(915) 490-8571

call now to book  
your massage  
and facial

lifestyle  
day spa

an aveda  
concept salon

1308 montana  
915 542 0000



Come and Compare, Our prices are affordable

New Image  
Laser Cosmetics  
Med Spa

Call for a Free Consultation  
591-4555  
Mon-Fri 8-5 Sat 9-2



- BOTOX® Injections
- BOTOX® Parties
- Latisse™
- Juvederm™
- Remove/Reduce Skin blemishes
- Skin Rejuvenation

- Medical Microdermabrasion
- Acne Treatment
- Facials
- Colorescience Mineral makeup
- Nail & Pedicures

- Belle Derm Skin Care Products
- Sauna Sessions Available
- Massage Therapy
- Healing Hands 799-8120
- Gift Certificates



Declare **WAR** on your **WRINKLES!**

**BOTOX \$12<sup>00</sup> PER UNIT**

(minimum 25 units)

Mention this ad and get an additional discount

1440 George Dieter #B

