

VINEYARD GAZETTE

Archived Edition: Friday, January 1, 2010

Short Films Night Is Long On Vineyard Spirit, Food and Fun

By JONAH LIPSKY

The Chilmark Community Center provided the perfect backdrop for a thorough community experience this past Saturday, an event called Family Film Feast put on by the Martha's Vineyard Film Festival.



The evening began with Gregg Harcourt, Mary Wolverton and Taurus Biskis playing music in the auditorium, with tables set for the all-Island, all-donated dinner that was being served. The entrance room was both the greeting area, where people bought tickets, and, on the other side, a rambunctious performance space for Donna Swift's IMP comedy improv group, working the crowd, parallel to the meal line.

After an hour of eating, listening to music and enjoying the amusements of the improvisers, the movies began. There were seven short films, four animated and three live action.

The program varied from a live-action short about a man walking up a flight of stairs only to ride the rail down at the end (Flights), to an animated epic in which a young protagonist travels to Antarctica in a rowboat to deliver his penguin friend to its rightful home (Lost and Found), to a silent animation modeled after a popup book (Happy Duckling), to a film in which a guitar tries to court a violin (Live Music).

One moviegoer, 10-year-old Shoshana Freed Boardman, had clear opinions about the films: "I didn't really like the movies that were just one thing. Like, Live Music was mostly just the music going on, whereas in the penguin thing (Lost and Found), there was a lot of different things that happened."

Critics aged two and a half to ten differed: “Good.”

“I don’t know.”

“The penguin [film] was bad and the music [film] was good.”

Lindsey Scott, director of children’s programs, said the festival screening committee viewed nearly 100 short films. “We decided which ones were our favorites and considered which films might play nicely together. Our curator, Nicole Drieske, director of the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival, assembled the films into programs that have a nice balance of short and longer films and animation and live action.”

Organizers put a premium on community sharing; the food was donated by Vineyard farms and prepared by Vineyard chefs. Heather Gude, this month’s chef, prepared more than 150 meals from food donated by Morning Glory Farm, the Farm Institute and Native Earth Teaching Farm.

“We want give our year-round residents something to do in the off-season,” said Ms. Scott about creating the event. “We want to highlight the work our farmers and musicians are doing, too, and celebrate it all.”

This was the second of three Family Film Feast events; the last of the season will be on Saturday, Jan. 30.