

Local filmmakers take Bancroft to big screen at Film Festival



Look out world - Bancroft hits the big screen this month at the Belleville Downtown International Documentary Film Festival! Now in its fourth year, 'DocFest,' which runs from Feb. 27 until Mar. 1, is bigger than ever. It features fifty documentaries celebrating life and human dignity, including two that were shot in Bancroft last year. Both were produced by WordBird Media's husband-and-wife-team Michelle Annette Tremblay and Sean Buk.

Friends in the Community is a celebration of friendship, and was produced in partnership with the North Hastings Community Integration Association (NHCIA), and Building the Future, which documents the Riverside Park Project's sustainable build, was produced in partnership with Bancroft Community Transit (BCT).

Gwen Coish, director of operations at BCT, says she's very pleased Building the Future is part of DocFest because it showcases how great things happen in a community when organizations work together toward a common goal.

'We're totally excited that both films are being featured in DocFest,' says Tremblay. 'This was our first time submitting to a festival and, honestly, we couldn't decide which film to enter. Building the Future is very special to us because of the community partnerships involved and the building's eco-friendly features. Plus, the new facility will engage local youths, encourage healthy activities and support the local economy. Of course we want to share that with the world and let people know about the awesome innovation happening right here in North Hastings!'

'But on the other hand,' she continues, 'Friends in the Community documents the great work that NHCIA does, and the life-changing friendships that grow as a result. We were honoured to work on both projects and really couldn't choose between them.' Tremblay says they finally decided to submit both films, with their fingers crossed that one would make the cut. 'We never expected both would be chosen!'

Tremblay grew up in Bancroft and takes a keen interest in supporting and promoting her home town. She writes for several publications and blogs, teaches media courses at Loyalist College, and is the editor of the Paudash Lake Conservation Association Newsletter. In 2011 she founded WordBird Media, which provides film production, marketing, graphic design, photography, web-design, copywriting, and project management. Tremblay is also a frequent guest speaker, and works as a public relations and economic-development consultant for various municipalities, non-profits, and businesses.

Around the time they met in 2002, Buk had just completed his first feature screenplay which got major buzz, and was commissioned to write a second. Buk collaborated with many other artists in Vancouver before relocating to Bancroft with Tremblay in 2005. Since moving here he has taught various filmmaking courses and collaborated with Tremblay on several film projects. This will be the first time one of their documentaries has been shown to a large live audience.

?Having Michelle and Sean involved in the festival is fantastic from the local filmmaker perspective, especially where they're bringing two different films to the schedule,? says Dug Stevenson, DocFest host and tourism director for Bay of Quinte Tourism. ?With Michelle and Sean in DocFest, we're able to extend our reach and create this new link with Bancroft. That's just awesome for us.?

Tremblay says she's thrilled to bring North Hastings to the big screen because people deserve to know what vibrant and innovative communities exists here.

Hazel Lambe, CAO of the Town of Bancroft agrees. ?Bancroft is a place of opportunities and support. These films are a perfect illustration of Bancroft's community values and the town applauds the organizations in sharing their initiatives in this very meaningful way,? says Lambe. ?Also, the visual experiences provided by these short films are exceptional.?

For more information on DocFest's special events, complete line-up of films and ticket information visit downtowndocfest.ca.

Submitted