



Sun Journal

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Film festival to re-emerge over four days in 2015

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Published on Monday, Nov 17, 2014 at 9:09 pm | Last updated on Monday, Nov 17, 2014 at 9:09 pm

LEWISTON — The community's all-volunteer film festival plans to re-emerge as a four-day event from Thursday, April 9 to Sunday, April 12.

The second annual Emerge Film Festival is scheduled to kick off with a 10th anniversary screening of the poetic art film “Cleophas and His Own,” based on Lewiston-native Marsden Hartley’s writing and paintings. Other plans call for an expansion of the student film festival and best-of screenings on the final day.

“We are so thrilled to be continuing to build on the success of our first festival,” Emerge board President Laura Davis said in a prepared statement. “We got such a great response from our local community, sponsors, film enthusiasts, and — most importantly — filmmakers with our inaugural event and we are delighted to be growing the festival to four days this year and really celebrate independent film in Maine.”

Though the 2015 festival is only five months away, it will follow an inaugural event that hurriedly replaced the Lewiston Auburn Film Festival.

Just weeks before that festival was to be held, director Joshua Shea was arrested and charged with possession of sexually explicit images of someone younger than 12. Several days after his arrest, that festival was cancelled and Emerge was created.

Within 10 days, Emerge had nonprofit status, a board of directors and had already expended from one day to two. Tickets went on sale at three weeks. And at the 10-week mark, filmmakers began arriving.

The Emerge festival sold more than 1,000 tickets and ended in the black. Its 2015 festival aims to do even better.

Though only about a dozen films have been submitted, Greenlaw and others expect hundreds more to arrive as the festival issues its call for entries in the coming days.

Greenlaw said the plan for 2015 includes the same broad focus, encompassing many genres of movies. However, more emphasis will be placed on student films. Though details are still being worked out, organizers hope to give local high schoolers a chance to meet and talk with some of the visiting filmmakers. And, as they did last year, students will be given free admission.

Few of today's students were watching movies when "Cleophas and His Own" was screened in Lewiston 10 years ago. Connecticut filmmaker and opera singer Michael Maglaras shot his Hartley movie at Maine locations, including the Washburn Norlands Living History Center in Livermore.

Organizers say details on the rest of the festival, including an awards ceremony and ticket sales, will follow in the coming months.

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