



Old Colony Memorial

PRINTER-FRIENDLY FORMAT

The future of film

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By **Sarah B. Wolfgang, Correspondent**

PLYMOUTH - When a judge from the Future Filmmakers' competition telephoned 17-year-old Erik Leupp to tell him he'd placed for his film *First Date*, the filmmaker from Somerville said he thought maybe he'd win for Best Comedy.

Shot simply, with just one actor (himself) and a stuffed pink platypus named Jessica, *First Date* turned Thursday's Plymouth Independent Film Festival's audience into a mess of chucklers and snorters. The mixture of improvised offbeat one-liners, deadpan delivery and expert editing proved side-splitting.

"It's important to go to a woman's heart first," Leupp's character says to his unseen warm-blooded date. "Other areas second."

But Boston-based Oliver Anderson scooped the Future Filmmaker's Felix award for Best Comedy with *Guidance*, a well-shot film about a high-school student who is pigeonholed as extremely violent when the guidance counselor reviews his SAT responses.

"According to this," the counselor says, looking at the answer, "duck sauce," in the analogy section, "You might kill or maim someone at any moment."

After that category, there were only four left: Best Screenplay, Best Editing, Best Cinematography and Best Picture. Leupp was feeling nervous.

"I thought they'd lied to me," he said, laughing.

But they hadn't. Ellen Snoeyenbos, founder of the Future Filmmakers' competition, opened the final white winner's envelope.

"Best Picture," she announced. Rip, rip. "Erik Leupp for *First Date*!"

This year, 24 students from Massachusetts and one from New York entered the 8-year-old competition. From that pool, the four judges - Ed and Charlotte Russell, Lynn Smith and Karl Meyer - watched the films over the course of an afternoon and chose 13 winners.

"I saw the gamut from one to 10," Ed Russell said. "I didn't just sit down and say I'm looking for the best direction, et cetera. It revealed itself as I watched the films."

Sponsored by the Friends of the Duxbury Free Library, the competition was created in 1999 by Snoeyenbos, the library's Young Adult/ Reference librarian, as the South Shore Video Contest.

In February 2006, Plymouth residents Ed and Charlotte Russell, who have both been with the Plymouth Independent Film Festival since its start three years ago, contacted Snoeyenbos about merging with the festival to become the PIFF Future Filmmakers Collaborative for students in grades 7-12.

"That made it fun, widened the audience," Snoeyenbos, of Halifax, said.

"What better way to get people in film than to get them in early," Ed Russell added. "They get that psychic reward and get to see what other people their age are doing."

And why is the award named Felix and not Oscar?

"The odd couple," Snoeyenbos said. "We got a letter from Hollywood encrusted in officialdom that said we were using the Oscar label illegally."

She laughed. "We were a little freaked out, so I thought, what about the odd couple - Oscar and Felix - and that's where Felix came from."

Marshfield filmmakers walked away with five of the 13 Felixes.

Ryan Kulp, 18, said his is going on the shelf over his bed. He won for his film, Video games, a social commentary about how video games are one of the most important things in his and his friends' lives.

"They are good things to look forward to," his friend Bill Hawley says in a phone interview scene in the film. "They are a big part of the good days in my life."

Kulp said he is working with his 18-year-old friend Michael DuBois on a new film due out in October. DuBois won two awards for his stunningly beautiful, well-edited and historically important film, Hatch Mill, about the history and current restoration of a woodworking mill in Marshfield.

Both Kulp and Hatch take the Digital Film class at Marshfield High School.

Comcast will create a marathon session of the winning films and present it on PACTV Channel 13. A DVD of all of the films will be catalogued at the Duxbury Free Library and will be available throughout the library system at www.duxburyfreelibrary.org.

Future Filmmakers' Felix Award Winners

1. Best Camera Work - Patricia Guinta (Boston) for Pianoforte
2. Best Satire - Josh Mohn (Marshfield) for Funnelball
3. Best Social Commentary - Ryan Kulp (Marshfield) for Video games
4. Best Literary Adaptation - Austin Dill (Sharon) for The Killers
5. Best Public Service Announcement - Devin Rebello (Kingston - Silver Lake) for Overcoming your Fears
Best Public Service Announcement - James Zinc (Kingston - Silver Lake) for Silver Lake Reads Summer Program
6. Best Audio/ Visual Effects - Andrew Katz (Boston) for May Cause
7. Best Social Impact - Roand Vatel (Brooklyn, NY) for Secrets Never Lie
8. Best Original Concept - Matt McCarty (Marshfield) for Lucky Penny
9. Best Comedy - Oliver Anderson (Boston) for Guidance
10. Best Screenplay - Ryan Gaynor (Falmouth) for Life of Jake Walker
11. Best Editing and Best Oral History - Josh Korn (Sharon) for Doris Edwards: Journey to Safety
12. Best Cinematography and Best Documentary (Marshfield) - Michael F. DuBois for Hatch Mill
13. Best Picture and Best Direction (Somerville) - Eric Leupp for First Date

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