Focus on Film

The Newsletter of the Palm Beach County Film and Television Commission | January 2019

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Pahokee Shines at Sundance

Documentary filmmakers Patrick Bresnan and Ivete Lucas have spent the last several years capturing stories in Pahokee – from prom night, to rabbit hunting, to senior skip day. The success of each short film (screened at Sheffield Doc/Fest, SXSW, Toronto International Film Festival and others) has had a direct benefit on the community, as the featured characters of each story have traveled to festivals along with the filmmakers to walk the red carpet and speak on panels, some even leaving Florida for the first time in their lives. Their biggest project yet, a feature-length documentary aptly titled Pahokee, has been accepted to premiere the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, the largest independent film festival in the U.S., from January 24 through February 3.

Pahokee follows four teens navigating the sometimes exciting, sometimes heartbreaking rite-of-passage rituals of their senior year as they make profound decisions about their futures. “It’s all about capturing what happens in real life and letting the story tell itself. Beyond the strictly observational filmmaking, we’ve added a component of personal cell phone footage from each character, making it more of a collaborative “yearbook” that shows all the twists and turns of their lives,” said Lucas. The four stars of the film, Na’Kerria, Jocabed, Junior, and BJ, will travel to Park City to attend film premieres and receptions. “Our mission from the start has been to create a bridge between Pahokee and other parts of the U.S. Now, that bridge is extending to the world, both as festivalgoers see their story and the kids travel to other countries to attend each festival,” said Bresnan. For more, visit pahokeefilm.com.

Tart Traditions in the Palm Beaches

There are some December traditions we can’t get enough of...like ESPN’s Cheribundi Boca Raton Bowl, played on the Tuesday before Christmas for the past five years at FAU Stadium. Gauging by the numbers, people all across the country are taking part in the college football tradition. More than 1.3 million households set their eyes on the Palm Beaches as the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) earned its first bowl win in program history, defeating Northern Illinois. The game aired live on ESPN and was a top five telecast on cable that night. Moreover, it was the number one sports program of the night. In addition to the live nationally televised game, college football fans had several opportunities to watch UAB’s high-powered offense dominate their opponent as the bowl game re-airied three more times. To catch more info on this event, rush over to thebocaratonbowl.com.

On the Town in The Palm Beaches

On the Town in The Palm Beaches hosted its recent Palm Beach episode premiere in appropriate elegance at The Breakers. The 10th installment of the series features Palm Beach and includes onsite visits with host Frank Licari to the Flagler Museum, The Little Red Schoolhouse, Society of the Four Arts, The Palm Beach Par 3, the Town Docks and much more. As a signature series of South Florida PBS, the show airs from Key West north to the Sebastian Inlet, serving over 6 million viewers. “This is a series we feel strongly about as it engages the community and we can share exciting things for people to do when they visit the area,” said Joyce Belloise, VP Content & Community Partnerships. The series will finish its third season by featuring Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Riviera Beach in brand new episodes. See more about the series at southfloridapbs.org.
5 EMMYS FOR THE KID STEW CREW

Author and Palm Beach resident James Patterson’s new public television children’s series, Kid Stew, was highly recognized at the 2018 Regional EMMY Awards at the 42nd Annual National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Suncoast chapter regional ceremony held in December. The series, co-produced and distributed by South Florida PBS, received seven nominations and won five awards. All four episodes received Emmys in the “Children/Youth/Teens” category and Armando Bernal IV, one of the show’s pre-teen hosts, was honored in the “Talent: Performer/Narrator” category. Kid Stew is a fun and educational program that aims to break the mold of what kids can expect from television, with sketches, musical numbers, interviews and more. A new season is expected to air nationally in May 2019. To learn more, visit kidstew.tv.

BOCA RESORT AIRS THE PALM BEACHES TV

The Palm Beaches TV is now available in every room at The Boca Raton Resort & Club! Guests of the resort can tune in Channel 51 to watch a live feed and learn about exciting experiences to be had across the County. The Palm Beaches TV offers high-quality, tourism-related family programming. Overseen by the Tourist Development Council, the channel also streams at the Palm Beach International Airport on two screens in the baggage claim area, and has a designated channel aboard the Bahamas Paradise Grand Classica cruise ship. The channel is also available in guest rooms at the Marriott Singer Island Beach Resort & Spa, the PGA National Resort & Spa, the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Palm Beach Gardens and in public venues such as the Palm Beach Convention Center, the Cultural Council and the lobby of the Brazilian Court Hotel. Owned and operated by Olympusat, the channel is also available anytime, anywhere on Roku and when you visit ThePalmBeaches.TV online. WATCH IT. SHARE IT. LIVE IT.

HONDA CLASSIC HONORED FOR IMPACT

Sports Destination Management, a national organization and publication dedicated to the sports tourism industry, designated the annual Honda Classic as one of its 2018 Champions of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism. This recognition comes after the PGA Tour event which, with support from the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, attracted a record-breaking quarter-million spectators to The Palm Beaches over seven days, with over 18 hours of live television coverage on NBC and The Golf Channel. Palm Beach County Sports Commission Executive Director George Linley told the Palm Beach Post that the event “creates immense economic benefits for The Palm Beaches while improving the quality of life for our local community.” The 2019 Honda Classic takes place February 25 through March 3. Visit thehondaclassic.com for more.

CELEBRATION OF JEWISH FILMS

As much a labor of love as a mission, The Donald M. Ephraim Palm Beach Jewish Film Festival strives to bring the finest examples of cinema from around the world to South Florida. The chosen films are as diverse as the community. Some focus on Jewish issues, others spotlight Jewish achievement and valor; still others document Jewish culture, arts and history. Founded in 1990, the festival continues to grow and evolve as they continue to expand the selection of films. Join the festival on opening day, January 20 to watch Papa as it makes its Southeast United States premiere. Theaters hosting the run of the festival include the AMC CityPlace 20, Cinemark 14 Boynton Beach, Cinepolis Jupiter and the Cobb Theatres in Palm Beach Gardens. For information on the screening schedule, ticket prices and more, visit palmbeachjewishfilm.org.

A SUPER SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR

Superheroes come in many forms and the South Florida Fair has chosen to honor heroes as this year’s theme. Several commercials have rolled out that feature the theme, all produced by local production company Brave Man Media out of Delray Beach. The company dedicated its highly creative team to produce a series of exciting video assets. “We wanted to prove that you can hire local and still produce at a national level. These spots are so much fun and look like they were produced in LA or NYC, but they were made right here in South Florida. We’re hoping this encourages other companies to keep it local,” says Damian Fitzsimmons, Director of Brave Man Media. The fair packs 17 days of exciting events with something for everyone. Join the fair beginning January 18. For more info on activities and tickets, visit southfloridafair.com.
It was standing room only at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Boca Raton in early December, as more than 250 guests attended the premiere screening for local filmmaker Mora Junior Etienne’s latest movie, *Until the Last Breath*. Set against the backdrop of eclectic Haitian subculture, the film is a story of one man’s courageous journey of self-discovery as he struggles to overcome life’s obstacles and challenges. “Many scenes for this film were shot in Palm Beach County and we are lucky to have such beautiful backdrops against which to film,” says writer/director Mora Etienne. Future plans for the film include screenings in Miami and Orlando as well as international screenings in February 2019 and beyond. See more about the film including the teaser trailer, synopsis and cast information at untilthelastbreathmovie.com.

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILM SPOTLIGHT**

The Kravis Center’s African-American Film Festival is celebrating 14 years this February. The annual event will exhibit films with an emphasis on the African-American experience that also feature African-Americans in central roles both in front of and behind the camera.

This year’s festival line-up will feature: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (set in central and southern Florida) on February 4, *Sparkle* on February 11 and *The Long Walk Home* on February 18. Tickets for the series are $30, or $12 per individual film. All films will be followed by a Q&A session in the hopes of educating, entertaining, and enlightening all those who attend. To purchase tickets for the festival, visit kravis.org/film.

**PHOTOSHOOTS BRING IN THE BUCKS**

Still photography is a thriving part of the production industry in Palm Beach County, generating over $11 million in revenue last year. Recent notable photoshoots have come from a variety of big brand clients, from the decadent sweets offered by The Swiss Colony, to the preppy fashions of Lacoste, to the trendy affordable offerings of Bon Prix. The assorted needs of these clientele were met easily with more than 2,000 square miles of diverse locations in The Palm Beaches. The Illinois-based production team for The Swiss Colony captured images at a private home in Ocean Ridge, set for an upcoming *Seventh Avenue Magazine* product campaign. For Lacoste, producers from Paris, France enjoyed the pristine coastline at South Beach Park in Boca Raton. Bon Prix’s UK fashions were modeled at the Lake Worth Casino Building and Beach Complex, utilizing the picturesque pier as a backdrop. See more about these brands online by visiting swisscolony.com, lacoste.com and bonprix.co.uk.

**24TH ANNUAL FOTOFUSION KICKS OFF**

FOTOfusion, a pop culture festival “where creativity and technology fuse,” is attracting hundreds of enthusiasts to The Palm Beaches each year. Held at the world-renowned Palm Beach Photographic Centre, the annual gathering presents five full days of seminars, multimedia presentations and panel discussions this January 21 through 26. Hobbyists and professionals are invited to have their portfolios evaluated by industry experts, and attendees gain hands-on experience through various computer labs and workshops. In addition, the West Palm Beach Arts and Entertainment District along with Zuma Press sponsors FOTOvision, an art experience featuring photography from around the world. The free event will be held at the Lake Pavilion in downtown West Palm Beach, Thursday, January 24 at 7pm. Visit fotofusion.org for more information.

**THE FAMILY BUSINESS**

For Dominic Giannetti, Producer and Owner/Operator of You Create Academy in Boca Raton, talent and passion for the entertainment biz runs in the family. His two daughters, Sofia (10) and Giuliana (8), are making a name for themselves through their very own production company SoGi Studios. Their growing Youtube Channel SoGiTV features vlogs, performances, webisodes of *Hey, South Florida!* and a sampling of their short films. In the past three years at the Kids’ Spooky Film Festival, they have taken home the 2016 Judges’ Choice, 2017 Peoples’ Choice, and 2018 Best in Family. Their latest film, *Circle in the Sand*, is available on Amazon Prime. “I’m amazed by how much my daughters accomplished this year. They have so many responsibilities and remain happy and dedicated. Best of all, they are excellent students!” said Giannetti. The family is now working on a project titled *Boca Witches*. Check them out at YouTube.com/SoGiTVChannel.
**LOCATION SPOTLIGHT**

**WORLD CLASS PUBLIC TENNIS CENTERS**

The City of Palm Beach Gardens Tennis Center is an award-winning public tennis facility offering 18 clay courts with a new two-story clubhouse in the works. Once it is completed, the 12,700 square foot clubhouse will offer indoor and outdoor dining, observation decks, a high-tech sports performance room, a pro shop, two rental facilities and much needed expanded parking.

Smaller productions may consider the County’s newest tennis center in Wellington. With 21 self-irrigated Har-Tru clay courts, the Wellington Tennis Center recently hosted a Citibank commercial featuring Serena Williams. The cinematic style of the project and personal storyline made the commercial very dramatic with royal palm trees swaying in the background.

The Delray Beach Tennis Center is a full-service public tennis facility with 14 clay courts, six hard courts, and a most impressive 8,200-seat stadium that offers a backdrop that is free from obstructions in the skyline. The management team has extensive production experience and is very accommodating to productions large and small. The center court can be customized to fit a brand’s color scheme making it a much sought-after location for tennis tournaments as well as tennis-related celebrity endorsements.

The southernmost public tennis facility in the County is found at Patch Reef Park. Mature trees line the roadway and make for picture-perfect driving shots under the canopy of shade and filtered light as the road leads back to the tennis center. Center court offers bleacher-style seating with shade canopies along the sides of the court and mature trees along the southern edge. To find out more about public tennis centers in PBC, visit pbfilm.com/locations.

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**EDUCATION CORNER**

**SSOF DEADLINE APPROACHES**

The deadline for the 24th Student Showcase of Films (SSOF) is just around the corner! The largest student film competition and awards show in Florida will present over $15,000 in prizes to student filmmakers, writers, graphic design and digital media artists. Students must submit their projects by January 25 for a chance to be honored at the sensational Red Carpet Award Show on April 5, which will also include a heartfelt and humorous tribute to acting legend and longtime SSOF supporter Burt Reynolds. There are 12 categories this year, including the Vanilla Ice Music Video Award, the Suzanne L. Niedland Documentary Award and, of course, the Burt Reynolds Scholarship awarded to a talented Palm Beach County high school senior. Open to all, PSAs in Environmental and Mental Health Awareness are back with their powerful messaging, as are the popular Animation, High School and College Feature categories! Learn more at pbfilm.com/SSOF.

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**NEW MAYOR APPOINTMENT**

The Film & Television Commission warmly congratulates Mack Bernard on his appointment as Mayor of the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners. Mayor Bernard has spent the last decade building an extensive public service resume, beginning in 2008 as the Delray Beach City Commissioner and elected to the Florida House of Representatives the following year. In November 2016, he was elected to the Palm Beach County Commission, District 7, where he has focused on creating more good paying jobs and job training opportunities, improving public safety and law enforcement relations, and increasing small business, women and minority participation in county contracts. Mack has put his life’s work into giving back to our community by providing opportunities for his constituents to succeed. Learn more about Commissioner Bernard at discover.pbgov.org.

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**FOCUS ON FILM**