

Library launches inaugural documentary festival



By Brock Weir

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As the stars and movie buffs left Toronto last month and the last reels came to a complete stop after the Toronto International Film Festival, local aficionados were putting the finishing touches on a film fest all their own.

The Aurora Public Library's first ever film festival ran their first reel on Monday with a screening of 'Code Breakers', a 2011 documentary by David Suzuki and Niobe Thompson on human migration to North America.

It was a documentary, and indeed docs are the focus of this new series.

The Documentary Film Festival continues this Tuesday, October 8 with a screening of something with a bit more of a local flavour with the *Mystery of Mazo de la Roche*.

The 2012 National Film Board documentary charts the complex life of the famed Newmarket-born author of the popular turn-of-the-century 'Jalna' novel series. In death, de la Roche has become the subject of fascination and speculation for booklovers and lovers of Canadiana. This film attempts to unravel the her life.

'There is definitely an eclectic mix of films,' says Cindy Shaver of the Aurora Public Library. 'The idea is to have a little something for everyone. There are some that have a more geographical twist to them. Others are international, such as *The Boxing Girls of Kabul*, which is pertinent because of Canada's role in Afghanistan. *Mazo de la Roche* hits close to home, and I think that speaks to people as they are fascinated with our local history.

'This is an opportunity to delve into that a little bit deeper.'

The idea to hold an inaugural documentary film festival was the idea of Kate, one of the Aurora Public Library's adult librarians. There was a desire to showcase the Library's 'fabulous' collection of international films 'and films that make you think outside the box,' says Ms. Shaver, and this was the perfect opportunity.

'With everyone in our community loving TIFF, we also have the Aurora Film Circuit that does this,' she says. 'They screen movies every month at the Cineplex Odeon and they give back to the library the films they screen. We have an amazing film collection ' and I'm going to say it is the best in the Region.

'This was our opportunity to highlight that. There are lots of people, like myself, who maybe would have wanted to go down to TIFF and maybe not had the opportunity. This is a chance to pull from our collection and highlight some of these films.'

It is also a chance, she says, to have that unique feeling that people experience seeing films up on the big screen with likeminded individuals.

‘You’re in this atmosphere where you’re feeding off everyone else’s energy, which is fabulous, and then, in that moment in time, have a little discussion afterwards,’ says Ms. Shaver. ‘I’m most looking forward to *Boxing Girls*. It is a fascinating story and you always like to see people who are suppressed coming out on top and pushing themselves to do better.’

Boxing Girls of Kabul is the penultimate screening in the Film Festival, unspooling at the Library on Wednesday, October 23.

Wipe Out, a film directed by Lionel Goddard, following the story of ‘three young men living with permanent brain damage resulting from head injuries received pursuing extreme sports’ screens Wednesday, October 16, while David York’s *Wiebo’s War*, closes the Festival on October 30.

All films start at 7 p.m.

FILM CONTEST

Film festivities continue at the Library throughout the fall with the second annual My APL video contest, open to everyone in the community to show what the Library means to you. One to three minute videos will be accepted via Facebook through December 15.

‘You’d be surprised how little time it actually takes,’ says Ms. Shaver. ‘Sometimes it seems pretty daunting but it doesn’t need to be. Just pick up your camera. You don’t have to be fancy if you have a compelling story to tell or an interesting take on a story. You’re definitely in the forefront for placing and winning that coveted cash prize!’