

## Take two

### Delta Film Festival returns with fewer films but more variety



Filmmaker Charlie Chapin, Ph.D. of Moonshadow Productions

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Film festivals serve a number of purposes, spotlighting the best new and independent movies being just one of them.

"The film festival really gives this community a chance to look at itself in a real positive way," said filmmaker Charlie Chapin, who is screening two shorts and a documentary this weekend at Manteca's Delta Film Festival. "The arts are alive and well here."

Now in its second year, the Delta Film Festival returns with a full schedule of documentaries, feature films, shorts and cartoons, as well workshops on digital filmmaking and screenwriting. It's all capped with a Sunday night awards gala. Films will be shown at the Marketplace Cinemas, with the workshops set for the nearby Strike Zone.

As for the films, the festival's lineup includes "True Friends," local director Shawn Williamson's picture about a young man trying to turn his life around; "The War Effort," a mockumentary about people's efforts to prove they are patriotic; and "Visas and Virtue," an Academy Award-winning short about a Japanese consul to Sweden who helped thousands of Jewish families flee the Nazis.

"It's not every day we get an Oscar winner in our community to teach filmmaking," said Linda Abeldt, executive director of the Manteca Convention and Visitors Bureau, which produces the festival. "Anybody that's interested in acting, directing or

filmmaking needs to come out."

Abeldt said the festival achieved its initial goal last year of helping attract productions by showcasing San Joaquin County as a location. For 2003, the aim was to streamline the festival to better benefit area residents and filmmakers. "This year, we understand the system," Abeldt said. "We realize that we don't have to accept all the films."

Although last year's festival was a success, Abeldt said that more than 90 percent of the submitted films were accepted. The festival was more selective this year.

"A couple of films didn't make the cut because of (graphic content)," she said, adding that the Delta Film Festival's fare is not rated but usually fits the PG-13 or R categories. "They were not appropriate for our community."

Still, Abeldt said, that shouldn't detract from this year's event, which includes presenting the festival's first Up And Coming Action Hero award to Daniel Bernhardt, who appears in both "The

Matrix: Reloaded" and "The Matrix: Revolutions."

Abeldt said the budget for this year's festival is about \$20,000, the same as 2002. The offerings, however, are more varied. There will be a two-day workshop titled "Digital

Filmmaking on the Fly" during which participants will film a short, edit it and screen the results at a wrap party set for Sunday night at Kelley Brothers Brewing Co., 112 E. Yosemite Ave.

And what of the movies screened last year in Manteca? Some, such as "The Ugly Kid," have been picked up for distribution. Perhaps more importantly, four movies have been shot in the county since last fall, Abeldt said.

The Lockeford-based Chapin plans to show two shorts this weekend, "You Don't Get A Second Chance to Make A First Impression" and "How To Keep



That Job." Both target high school and college students. He's also screening a 27-minute, award-winning documentary "Meth: A Dark Work World and Deadly Epidemic," which was produced for the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department.

Of course, a film festival's ultimate purpose is to expose its audience to a different type of cinema. The Delta Film Festival certainly does that.

"It's a great way to see something that's not mainstream," organizer Zac Sanford said.

