

Destinations: ReelAbilities Film and Arts Festival Begins Fifth Year

ReelAbilities Film and Arts Festival returns to Houston for its fifth year February 19-23, with an award winning film festival, live music jam session, art exhibit, educational tours to local schools and seminars at offices around Houston and much more. All events are planned with the intention to use the arts as a vehicle to educate the community and change perceptions about individuals with varying levels of abilities, all at no cost to participants and attendees.

"The impact that ReelAbilities Houston has on the lives of Houstonians is immeasurable," says Vikki Evans, event chair. "Even if you don't live with a disability yourself, you've probably interacted with someone dealing with a disability that you may not fully understand or know how to interact with."

"It is our mission at ReelAbilities to challenge the way people think about disabilities, and to encourage Houstonians to take action...treating each other with more respect and compassion than ever before."

ReelAbilities, originally founded in New York City in 2007, is now presented in 15 cities, generating and nurturing awareness of those living with disabilities of all types by showcasing their lives and stories through art, film, music and inspirational talks.

The film portion of the festival will take place from February 19-23 at Edwards Greenway Grand Palace Stadium 24, 3839 Wesleyan, where 15 movies will be screened followed by interactive panels to encourage audience discussion.



Vikki Evans, ReelAbilities Chair, chats with Grant Manier, visiting artist at the REELART opening at The Center for Art and Photography. The ReelAbilities Festival runs Sunday, Feb. 19 through Feb. 23.

As one of the most innovative cities hosting ReelAbilities, the Houston festival includes events such as: ReelPeople: UpAbilities, February 16 at 6:15 p.m. at Rice University Shepherd School of Music. This program includes Unique Perspectives from three extraordinary speakers focusing on the impact technology and games have on the lives of those

living with varying levels of abilities.

The films include documentaries, dramas and comedies. Opening night, *Enter the Faun*, welcomes the Houston Ballet as a new partner, and features Dr. Kelli Cohen Fein, a board member of the Ballet, and Dr. Cindy Ivanhoe's reflections on surprising results of working with patients. A mental health focus takes place Monday night, and *Laughter Yoga* is added to the documentary *Stilts and Spokes* on Tuesday night. The film maker from *Gabe* will be present at the matinee on Wednesday, February 22, and that evening a very moving film on three students in high school who are blind will be shown. Following the closing movie on Thursday, February 23, ReelMusic will wrap up the festival at The Secret Group, 2101 Polk, beginning at 6 p.m. (doors open 5 p.m.). This is an invitation to all musicians with disabilities to jam with the band.

Along with host city organizer, JFS Alexander Institute for Inclusion, and in collaboration with the City's Department of Neighborhoods, Houston's Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, lead support from The Bristow Group and TIRR Memorial Hermann (founding partner), all ReelAbilities Houston events are free and open to the public.

All Festival events are free and all films are shown at Edwards Greenway Grand Palace Stadium 14 with parking free, also. Although admission is free, space is limited. Registration is required. For information and tickets, please go online: ReelAbilitiesHouston.org.

To Comfort Always - Aromatherapy in Mainstream Medicine

By Karen Cottingham

To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always... These timeless words of Hippocrates, the "Father of Modern Medicine", are as profound and pertinent today as they were during his lifetime, nearly twenty-five centuries ago. While contemporary medicine is unsurpassed for the knowledge and innovations that *cure or relieve* many formerly hopeless conditions, the healers of ages past were the experts in delivering *comfort* to the healing process.

Traditional methods to soothe both body and soul - such as acupuncture, meditation, and aromatherapy - are now being integrated into some of the best practices of medicine. As close as the Texas Medical Center, modern technological excellence sits comfortably side-by-side with age-old healing practices.

This Wednesday, February 15, meeting of the South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America will explore the convergence of the deeply-rooted practice of aromatherapy with contemporary clinical medicine. MD Anderson Cancer Center nurses Annie Wilson and

Chanelle Clerc will discuss their encouraging experience of using essential oils therapeutically for hospitalized patients as well as for patients' family members.

Essential oils are chemical compounds produced by aromatic herbs for the plant's own purposes - to protect against disease, to deter hungry insects, and to attract pollinators. Clinical aromatherapy is the scientifically sound practice of administering these essential oils to patients to improve their psychological or physical well-being. It is an underutilized but extremely effective means of easing com-

mon symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, discomfort, or nausea. Aromatherapy can also be used to improve attention, focus and memory, and to stabilize declining cognitive function.

The program, *To Comfort Always - Aromatherapy in Mainstream Medicine*, is designed to provide responsible information about the clinically observed benefits of aromatherapy. After this presentation, guests may feel confident enough to include comforting aromatherapy in their own self-care and their care of loved ones.

The program will be held at the beautiful Cherie Flores

Garden Pavilion at 1500 Hermann Drive. The entrance to the Pavilion's parking lot is where Crawford Street T-intersects with Hermann Drive. Herb Society members gather at 6:15 p.m. The free, public program begins at 7:15 p.m.

February Classic Movie

The Bellaire City Library, 5111 Jessamine, is presenting a cutting edge comedy/drama on Wednesday, February 15, from 1-2:45 p.m. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* crossed many perceived lines in its treatment of interracial relationships in the 1960s. Katharine Hepburn received an Oscar for Best Actress and the film also received a Best Writing award. In addition, the film was nominated for eight other Academy Awards. Spencer Tracy was nominated posthumously for Best Actor. Sidney Poitier and Katharine Houghton won international acclaim for their roles as the young engaged couple.

For more info call Terri Mote, Reference Librarian, at (713) 662-8166.

Beer Pairing with 8th Wonder Brewery and MasterChef Winner Luca Manfè

The Italian Cultural & Community Center, 1101 Milford Street, will host a beer pairing on Thursday, February 23, at 7 p.m., a first-time beer event for the ICC. 8th Wonder Brewery's craft beers will be paired with *MasterChef* Winner Luca Manfè's bite sized creations.

More information about the event can be found at www.icchouston.com.

Ticket Prices: \$60 for ICC Members and \$65 for Non-Members. Reservations can be made by calling (713) 524-4222 ext.7 or visiting www.icchouston.com.

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At the Movies
with Martin Duran

"Comin' at Ya!"

In 1981, 3D was brought back to life - for only two years, though - with the surprise hit, "Comin' at Ya!". The film is a 3D homage of sorts to the spaghetti western with large doses of Grindhouse elements. It's gimmicky, over the top and the filmmakers knew they weren't trying to produce the next "Citizen Kane." But if looked at as campy B-quality fare, it can be a great deal of fun.

The film is now available on a 3D (and 2D) remastered Blu-Ray from MVD Visual.

Under the direction of Ferdinando Baldi, this Spanish, Italian and U.S. production (it's in English), features the producer and executive producer of the movie, Tony Anthony and Gene Quintano, as actors. They portray Hart and Pike, respectively. Hart's fiancée, Abilene, you see, has been kidnapped on their wedding day by-yep, you guessed it-Pike. So Hart (a reformed gunslinger) sets out to rescue her and make the ruthless bandits pay for their evil ways.

Future Pedro Almodovar regular Victoria Abril portrays Abilene.

Baldi stuffs the 91 minutes of its running time with 3D thrills. As the title suggests, there are bats, snakes, fists, flaming arrows, a bowling ball, coins, a spinning yo-yo and much more jumping off the screen. That's not surprising since the poster tagline was that 3D was back, bigger and better (well, they got one, maybe two, right!).

There have certainly been superior 3D films to this one. However I enjoyed it and laughed throughout. Baldi and his crew deserve credit for trying everything but the kitchen sink as effects. Towards the end, though, the third dimension effects begin to wear thin. In a number of scenes there is no dialogue—a smart choice, as when the protagonists speak, the pacing comes to a screeching halt.

For more information, go to www.mvdshop.com. Keep the rating in mind! ☆☆ (out of four)