

Great Plains Film Festival

*Director wants festival
to be 'something special'*

BY JENNIFER WALKER
Staff Reporter

Fifty films for \$15.... That's what the Great Plains Film Festival offers from July 15-27 at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater.

Not only will festival-goers get a great deal, but they'll also get a chance to see independent films and discuss them with the filmmakers and stars.

The films are grouped into five categories: Dramatic Feature, Documentary Feature, Dramatic Short, Documentary Short and Made for Public Television. The only restrictions are that the film must be about the Great Plains or the filmmaker must be from the area.

The festival is also a competition, with awards going to the best film in each category. The Rainbow award is given to the film that best shows the richness of culture of the region.

The Mary Riepma Ross award is given to a Great Plains filmmaker who has made a significant contribution to the art of cinema and the culture of the United States. This year's Mary Riepma Ross award winner is Peter Fonda, whose distinguished career includes the film "Easy Rider," which earned him an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay in 1969.

A retrospective of Fonda's work including "Easy Rider" and his newest work, "Ulee's Gold," will highlight the festival. "Ulee's Gold," written and directed by Victor Nunez, stars Fonda as Ulysses Jackson, a Florida beekeeper, war veteran and widower struggling with the collapse of his family.

Fonda's work is just one part of the two-week festival. The Nebraska State Historical Society will host a symposium titled "Filmmaking in Nebraska." The program will show clips from the Society's archives, the oldest surviving Nebraska scene on film and scenes from and epic Western made in Chadron, Neb. in 1915.

History and culture are two defining traits of the festival. Dan Ladely, Ross Theater director and coordinator of the festival, said that is what makes the Great Plains Film Festival unique.

"I wanted to do something special," he said. "There are too many film festivals. Every major city has one. I didn't want to just do another film festival."

The films festival relate this cultural diversity in different ways. Gary Rhine has offered his documentary, "Your Humble Serpent: The Wisdom of Reuben Snake," which illuminates the life of recently deceased medicine man and politician, Reuben Snake. Two University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumni, Todd Nelson and Michael Hofacre, will present a documentary about street kids, "Surviving Friendly Fire." The film was already featured at the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival this year.

Nelson and Hofacre aren't the only Nebraskans to enter the competition. Jon Bokenkamp, a Kearney native, will show his short documentary, "After Sunset: The Life and Times of the Drive-in Movie." The movie was filmed in various sites around the

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1997 Great Plains Film Festival Finalists

Made for public television

Fate of the Plains by Christein Lesiak
In Search of the Oregon Trail by Michael Farrell
Iowa: An American Portrait by Tom Hedges & Doug Brooker
Letter from Waco by Don Howard

Dramatic Feature Films & Videos

Cause N' Defect by Dave Wewee
The Scottish Tale by Ann Boehike & Mark Polhemus
Shady Grove by Christian Moore

Documentary Feature Films & Videos

Riding the Rails by Michael Uys & Lexy Lovell
Surviving Friendly Fire by Todd Nelson & Michael Hofacre
Troublesome Creek by Steven Ascher & Jeanne Jordan
Your Humble Serpent: The Wisdom of Reuben Snake by Gary Rhine

Dramatic Short Films & Videos

Animosity by Brad Stephens
Anna in the Sky by Mark Edgington
Blood Memory: The Voice of Sand Creek by Deborha Dennison
Blue City by David Birdsell
Bonnie Lookaway's Iron Art Wagon by Wes Studie
Fearsome Dancer by Lorie M. Neal
Getting It Right by Emily Milder
Planet Trash by Kevin McKinney
Porch Light by Richard Endacott
Prairie Storm by Don Maxwell
Pressurecooker by Christopher Null
Qiana by Sarah Knight
The Ying Quartet-An Iowa Experience by David Welsh

Documentary Short Films & Videos

After Sunset: The Life & Times of the Drive-in Movie by Jon Bokenkamp
Chasing the Dream: A Bullriding Documentary by Harry Lynch & Jeff Fraley
Crawfish and Freys by Linda Haskins
Family Tree by Hayden Woods Grooms
Fat of the Land by Sarah Lewison & Niki Cousino
Finished Knowing by C. Brett Marottoli
Gift of the Grandfathers by NFB
Middle of Some Nowhere by P. McKerrow
My Father's Garden by Miranda Smith
Pepper's Pow Wow by Sandra Osawa
Presbyterian Medical Services by Gia Civerolo
Standing on the Edge Watching by C. Melinda Levin
The Burning Barrell by Tim Schwab & Chrisina Craton
Votes for Women by Martha Wheelock & Kay Weaver
Walk This Way by Chris Sheridan