



Ojai film series focuses on food, agriculture and environmental issues

By Lisa McKinnon
Thursday, November 6, 2008

When last seen in public, actress Daryl Hannah was being plucked out of a walnut tree by police.

Two years later, the reason for her protest — closure of a community garden in South Central Los Angeles — has yet to be resolved: The garden is gone, but the landowner has not been able to start construction on the warehouses that were to take its place.

It is a "social underdog story" in which "everyone has their flaws and no one is free from the temptations of power, greed and revenge," filmmaker Scott Hamilton Kennedy writes on the Web site for "The Garden," the documentary he made about the 14-acre site.

Kennedy will visit Ojai to discuss the film when it screens Nov. 18 as part of the Films for Thought series.

Organized by Food for Thought Ojai, a nonprofit group devoted to implementing farm-to-school salad bars and other health-related programs, the series includes documentaries and short films that focus on food, agriculture and the environment.

Each double feature will start at 7 p.m. and run for about 90 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session with an attending filmmaker. The free screenings will take place in the Matilija Junior High School auditorium.

The series starts with what some might consider the end: a trash heap. "Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home" will screen Wednesday with "The Story of Stuff."

The latter is an animated short in which narrator Annie Leonard takes viewers on a guided "tour" of "where stuff comes from and where it goes."

The former is a documentary by Andrew Nisker, who talked a friend and his family into keeping rather than throwing away their trash for a three-month period. The results were both predictable (a pungent, maggoty pile of bags in the garage) and not so much (the family decides to get rid of its SUV).

Nisker, who was inspired to make the film after witnessing the results of a garbage strike in Canada, will answer questions after the screening.

On Nov. 18, "The Garden" will be shown along with "The Man Who Planted Trees," an Academy Award-winning animated short based on the story by Jean Giono and narrated by Christopher Plummer.

The series concludes Nov. 20 with some local talent: Filmmaker Lisa Brenneis, who with husband Jim

Ojai film series focuses on food, agriculture and environmental issues

Churchill grows Pixie tangerines and other citrus in Ojai, will screen "Scenes from the Wild Mushroom Trade," her exploration of the business of foraging for and selling the titular fungi.

Also screening Nov. 20 will be "All in This Tea," in which documentarians Les Blank and Gina Leibrecht follow tea expert David Lee Hoffman to China, where he runs into bureaucratic indifference to the skills and traditions of tea farmers living in poverty. Leibrecht will be present for the post-screening question-and-answer session.



© 2008 Ventura County Star