

BestFest student films run this weekend

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SAN DIEGO — The BestFest America festival will feature 51 award-winning student films, including 14 by North County filmmakers, this weekend.

The annual two-day event, sponsored by the Visual Arts Foundation, is the largest student film festival in the country, officials said. It will be held at La Jolla's Sherwood Auditorium, at 700 Prospect St., from noon to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets at the door cost \$5 per screening — each screening shows seven to 10 films — or \$20 to see all 51. The films, which run between one and 14 minutes, range from music videos to public service announcements to comedies.

The festival will include two free seminars: one at 1:45 p.m. Saturday about musical sound, and one on life after film school set for 2 p.m. Sunday.

The short films were chosen from 503 submissions, officials said, from across the nation. The adjudicators included college professors, professional judges, Academy Award winners and Hollywood producers.

“I'm just amazed by how many films from North County made it into the festival this year,” festival director David Larson said Friday. “What really surprised me is the quality of film that measures up with anything in the country. ... (They're) just some really talented students.”

The students will introduce their films and answer questions afterward.

North County filmmakers include Peter Stoll, whose “Remote Reality” is about a TV program that provides clues to an untimely death. The Palomar College film runs at noon Saturday.

Michael Gallagher's “Flat” is a comedy about how a misty walk in the wood puts everything at risk. The Torrey Pines High School student's film runs at noon Sunday.

Trevor Ervin's “Departure” is a film about how loss and discovery take unexpected turns in a haunted house. The Orange Glen High School student's film runs at noon Saturday.

From Valley Center High School, Rodney Krueger's “Levy” is about how superheroes deal with the loss of one of their own. The

film runs at noon Saturday. “There’s some pretty neat special effects in there,” Rodney said. “It looks pretty good and it’s creative.”

Six Poway High School films were chosen. They are:

- “The Stranger” by Mike Roddy, a drama about a quiet stranger and old west justice. It runs at 3:45 p.m. Sunday.
- Garrett Shannon’s “A Step in the Right Direction” is about a man dissatisfied with industry, who returns to nature. It runs at 3:45 p.m. Sunday.
- Jordan Burt’s “Contrast” is a film about how urban life and ocean vistas clash. It runs at 6:15 p.m. Saturday.
- Ray Roman’s “American Living” is a music video about how alcohol abuse tests a relationship. It runs at noon Sunday.
- Blake LaRue has two films in the festival. “Littering is Bad” is a public service announcement by clay figures who explore the cause and effects of trash. It runs at 6:15 p.m. Saturday.
- Blake’s “Haus” is an animated music video about a man attracted to a house with special powers. It runs at 3:45 p.m. Sunday.

Four Carlsbad High School films were chosen: Jacqueline Caraglior’s “The Hardy Boys.” It runs at noon Saturday.

Sarah Kapp’s “Dogzilla” is a 1950s throw-back “B” horror film. The comedy runs at 3:45 p.m. Sunday.

Alex Corracino’s “A Girl and Her Squid” is a drama about how an outcast girl and her only friend fight discrimination. It runs at noon Sunday.

Breeze Kanikula’s “Built to Spill” is about how violence, decay and monotony are used to sell music. It runs at noon Sunday.

Larson said the number of awards coming out of Carlsbad High is impressive given that the school has “next to nothing” in film equipment.

“I’m amazed by what they are able to produce each year; it’s remarkable,” he said. “Giving birth to a film, that is good, is one of the most difficult things on the planet. ... These are just gems.”

For information, log onto www.bestfestamerica.com or call (858)449-7085.

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