

October 24, 2019 SB Meeting
Public Comments
Margaret Wohler

Good Evening Board Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Nolan and Honorable School Board Members,

My name is Margaret Wohler and I am the chair of the Alexandria Film Festival, now in our 13th year. The Alexandria film festival is a 501(c)3 all volunteer arts charity whose mission is to plant a seed of independent creative filmmaking in Alexandria. We know there are plenty of filmmakers in our area; we want them to submit their creative projects to us! This year's festival is set for Veteran's Day weekend, November 7-10. We typically attract about 1,000 film lovers to our 4 day festival. This year we are screening 53 films of all types from 10 countries and welcoming 64 filmmakers to Alexandria. Actors, directors, writers, score composers and film crews are flying in from India, Scotland, Arizona, LA and Montreal to join us in discussions with our audiences about big ideas, visions and social trends expressed through the film arts. We hope you can join us!

We offer cost free screenings and filmmaker discussions all day on Friday, November 8 at the Charles E. Beatley Central Library on Duke street. We are particularly proud this year of a partnership we have pioneered with Northern Virginia Community College's film degree program. This program was started a few years ago by film professor Lucy Gebre and now enrolls about 300 students. Professor Gebre has chosen the best of her students' work to screen at the Beatley library in the afternoon, right after the high schools let out, so that local students interested in filmmaking can come talk to NOVA film students and the dean, and view their work. We will also be screening a noted historical film from the NOVA film program, "Gabriel's Revolt" about a Virginia slave rebellion in the summer of 1800.

The film festival continues on Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10, with ticketed screenings at the AMC Hoffman. We will be welcoming Alexandria hometown girl, actress, director and SNL (Saturday Night Live) alumna, Casey Wilson, on Saturday for the screening of her newest film, "Daddio" and discussion with the audience. We also welcome back Alexandria native Marc Carlini with his film, "She's in Portland" on Sunday afternoon.

We are also very excited to host the D.C.-area premiere of "This Changes Everything." The truth about pernicious gender discrimination in Hollywood is told by its biggest stars: Meryl Streep, Natalie Portman, Jessica Chastain, Tiffany Haddish, Cate Blanchett, Reese Witherspoon, and many more, including director Maria Giese, who will be with us.

Lisa Wolfinger, who many Alexandrians will remember as the director of "Mercy Street" is back with her new film "The Kids We Lose", which chronicles problems in the juvenile justice educational system.

We offer 2 Veteran's showcases that are cost free for active and retired service members and a guest on Saturday that screen films of interest to military families. I have copies of the 2018 schedule with information inside on the table.

We hope you can join us for the Alexandria Film Festival November 7-10 as we "Celebrate Independents"! Thank you..