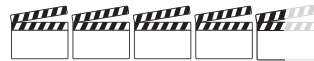


MOVIE REVIEW

# Lincoln

By Leonard Pirkle



Steven Spielberg has once again directed a film that draws the viewer into each and every detail on the screen, much like a painting by one of the Masters. *Lincoln* is a film that should be seen in a grand old cinema such as the Orinda Theatre.

Set in 1865 during the final year of the American Civil War, the film deals with a very select matter of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which outlaws slavery and involuntary servitude, and its passage through Congress. The dilemma facing our 16th president was whether to end the war and save thousands of lives or push through the amendment and set a moral compass to be followed for generations to come. Of course we know the decision he made, but that does not diminish the drama that unfolds and the behind-the-scenes shenanigans that ensue by his minions.

The main cast of Daniel Day-Lewis as Lincoln, Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln and Tommy Lee Jones as Thaddeus Stevens, has a combined five Oscars to their credits along with Spielberg's three, establishing the bone fides for an instant classic. The remaining cast is well selected with each member delivering a screen presence that demonstrates a high proficiency at their art.

The 2.5-hour masterpiece is almost entirely dialog driven, the script by Tony Kushner is bound to be nominated for an Oscar; its brilliance is that each character brings something of utmost importance to each scene. *Lincoln* was historically known for being a "story teller," the home-spun humor and his ability to bridge difficult issues and challenges through parable is evident in this film and a testament to the depth of this screenplay.

The film is rated PG-13 for intense scenes



Photo Touchstone Pictures

from the horrors of war, not quite on the level of those shown in the opening moments of *Saving Private Ryan*, but Spielberg did obviously want to establish the basis of the dilemma facing President Lincoln in delaying the end of the bloodiest war in our history. Taking children to this film should be an informed decision; younger kids won't last the 150 minutes and will be impacted by the scenes of carnage.

I highly recommend that you see this film on the big screen and see it soon.

Leonard Pirkle is the executive director of the California Independent Film Festival and can be seen each Tuesday at 6 p.m. on the Real to Reel Show, www.TRadioV.com.

# 15th Annual California Independent Film Festival a Blockbuster

Submitted by Stephanie Kusinski

Wrapping up the 15th Annual California Independent Film Festival, CAIFF president and founder Derek Zemrak reported a tremendous increase in attendance. Ticket sales were up 23 percent from the last festival, and sponsorships and program ads were up 129 percent, setting a record for this annual festival which is dedicated to bringing independent films to the East Bay and providing a venue for local filmmakers. While the festival faced several changes, such as moving from its usual February date to November and being shortened from seven days to four, audiences were not short-changed by the number of films CAIFF presented. All of the feature



films were well attended – in particular the Oscar-buzzing international film *Lore*. The kid's program saw a huge increase in attendance, and the local filmmaker showcase was also a big hit, highlighting the burgeoning filmmakers and the film industry as a whole for the Bay Area. "CAIFF is on the right track to being a major player in the film festival arena," said CAIFF Program Director Joanne Foy.



## 'Tis the Season of Giving

**Blanket & Bedding Drive for Shelter Inc.** The following bedding items are needed for Shelter Inc.'s winter program: new or gently used blankets (twin, full, queen); new twin-size bedding (mattress pads, bedspreads, pillows, pillow cases). Donations can be dropped off at the bin in the lobby of Coldwell Banker, 5 Moraga Way until Dec. 5. For info, contact Rick Booth (925) 212-8869 or email Rick@BoothHomes.com.

**"Warm Up Winter" Campaign.** Throughout December, DoGood Vines will pour complimentary wine tastings for customers at local retail shops serving as drop-off locations for warm clothing donations to benefit Central County Homeless Outreach in Martinez. Donors will receive a two-for-one voucher from Town Hall Theatre (THT) to see its production of *It's A Wonderful Life* at all donation sites. Venture Men's Goods in Lafayette will remain a drop-off site through December and THT, also a drop-off site for warm clothing donations, will serve complimentary DoGood Vines wine from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m., before the 8 p.m. show, Thursday, Dec. 6 and will host a reception for all the retailers and supporters on Dec. 13 from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. to recognize the community's success in coming together to contribute to a very important cause. Please call (925) 283-1557 for more information.

**Toy drive for the Bay Area Rescue Mission.** The Christian Club of Campolindo High School is hosting three toy bins to benefit the 5,000 homeless and needy children served each year at the Bay Area Rescue Mission. The bins are located outside of the counseling offices and other locations around campus from now until Dec. 14 at 300 Moraga Road, Moraga. For more info, email Claire DeWolf at dewolfs4@yahoo.com.

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program.** The mission of the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in Contra Costa County. Please join us in donating to the Toys for Tots Program at your local Moraga, Orinda or nearest fire station. This program will be running through Dec. 21.

**Roughing It Day Camp - Collecting Donations for One Warm Coat, Toys for Tots, and Food Drive.** Please donate coats of any size, new/unwrapped toys and non-perishable food items Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 27 to Roughing It Camp Office, 1010 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette.



Photo Amanda Griggs

**Stuffed Animal Collection.** The Moraga Police Officers Association along with S.A.F.E. (Stuffed Animals For Emergencies) is collecting new or gently used stuffed animals to help children through traumatic experiences. The stuffed animals are given to local police and fire departments to distribute to children they encounter who have been affected by traumatic events. S.A.F.E also facilitates the distribution of donated stuffed animals for a variety of charitable purposes to help children. This year's annual holiday collection drive ends Dec. 28. New or gently used stuffed animals can be dropped off at the collection area located in the lobby of the Moraga Police Department, 329 Rheem Blvd. Thank you for your support!

### Need Donations?

Season of Giving announcements will continue through Dec.19. Submissions can be sent to calendar@lamorindaweekly.com.

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