



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published June 1st, 2016

## LAC's First Short Documentary Competition a Rousing Success

By Sophie Braccini



Josh Silva Photo Sophie Braccini

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center auditorium was jam-packed with a buzzing crowd excitedly anticipating the presentation of the first Lamorinda Arts Council short documentary competition. That Sunday afternoon saw the crowning of four amateur videographers age 8 to adults. The quality of the work presented is a harbinger of LAC offering the competition again next year.

The short films presented on May 15 could not have been more different, ranging from vacation movies to political satire, from two to 15 minutes in length, from serious and analytical to poetic or humorous.

The 17 movies were competing in four different categories: elementary school, middle school, high school and adults. From an early age, the mastery of the media was impressive.

The youngest contestant Jason Friedman, a third grader at Glorietta Elementary School in Orinda, had shot a movie about Miwok Indians. His mother, Meredith Friedman, said that the result was truly

her son's creation, even if she supported him along the way.

"My biggest work was to keep him on track," she said. Like most contestants, Jason filmed with his iPhone and edited using iMovie. His mother says she was very surprised at how quickly her son took to the technology.

The elementary group was one of the most prolific, presenting a trip to the zoo, explaining fitness, and talking about books or art. Del Rey Elementary fifth grader Jack Nixon won in that category with his movie "Public Art Everywhere." When he announced the results, judge Joel Patterson said how impressed all of the judges had been by the maturity of the young talents. Not an empty compliment coming from someone who is a veteran producer on shows such as "60 Minutes."

The middle school competitors were a big hit with the judges and the crowd. Using an app for instant voting, LAC asked viewers at the end of the festival to select their favorite, and it was the winner of the middle school category, Josh Silva's "ABC World News: The Journalism Formula" that was selected as the public award. The satirical documentary aimed at demonstrating that this station's news is just based on an empty formula designed more to draw crowds than inform. A very well edited opinion piece, the documentary used apropos derision.

The high school group with six films from four different local high schools went from spoof to very elaborate pieces. One film talked about social justice, another about a class, a unique film called "Burgers: an Odyssey" by Acalanes' Karl-Erik Mills, made a wonderful use of close-ups, music and silence. But this curious and unique ode to the national culinary delight did not win first place. The

judges preferred "Eating Through the South" a travel documentary by Miramonte 9th grader Jack Lewis. The well-constructed and interesting film included a lot of animations that gave it a very professional feel.

Graham Roberts won the adult competition with an artistic and poignant movie about a homeless person who has built a makeshift castle made of scraps and jetsam on a beach. That category also proposed an analytical movie about the power of women, and a unique documentary by local photographer Lewis Giles using series of snapshots to magnify the work of steel construction workers.

Julie Rubio, a local film maker of such films as "East Side Sushi" and "One," said that everyone should be very proud of himself or herself, and that she had been very impressed by the quality of both the direction and editing of the amateur film makers. For Rubio, film is the strongest medium for provoking thoughts and sparking discussions. Lawrence Khol, LAC president, confirmed that with the festival that had been proposed by Meredith Friedman and Kahl Dutch, the non-profit was at the core of its mission of inspiring artistic creation of all types.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA