

33 MOVIES Going 'Grene'

This local comedy fest is infectious.



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MOVIES ENTERTAINMENT 33

Everything's Gangrene

Local comedy film festival celebrates its ninth year.

BY RYAN MICHAEL PAINTER
rpainter@inthisweek.com

There were a lot of movies made in the '80s. I'm not referring to anything that graced the screen at the local movie house (proper multiplexes were unimaginable), but the short masterpieces made possible by the golden age of the camcorder. Fathers all over the world (perhaps it was some civic duty) found themselves archiving Christmas and other blackmailing opportunities. Suddenly any idiot could make a movie. And we did. My friend Jeremy had aspirations of becoming a director (turns out he's a cinematographer), and would gather our compatriots together to make some of the most brilliant kung-fu-action-thriller-sci-fi films never seen. As gratifying as the creative process is, films are made to be seen by an audience. Sadly, we never found ours.

Friends Mike Terrell, Nate Peck and Larry and Craig Nybo remedied their similar situation by hanging a white sheet between two tall poles

in one of their backyards and threw the inaugural Gangrene Film Festival. The results were positive enough to warrant a second and it wasn't long before the festival was moved from the backyard into a high school to accommodate their audience. But the financial and time commitments were becoming too much for the friends to continue with the festival. The problem was their audience wasn't satisfied, and after two years of continual harassment the festival returned. This time The Davis Arts Council was involved and the venue was moved to The Ed Kenley Amphitheater.

Unlike most film festivals, Gangrene offers more than a series of shorts. In the past, there have been live band performances and dancers. This year they are flying in Gerry Phillips from Detroit, who became a Web phenomenon when he posted various clips of himself on YouTube playing the melody to famous songs with nothing but his hands. They also offer the audience a rare chance to in-

teract with the directors who introduce their film and stick around for questions.

Now in its ninth year, the festival has seen unprecedented growth. Mike Terrell, head of the production design department, explains, "When we started to take submissions they were local; slowly they started to come from out of state; and this year we have a film from Germany."

As head of design, it is Terrell's job to decorate the stage to fit with this year's theme of \$Nine.99 which is based around the idea of a over-the-top slimy used car salesman and their in-your-face style of advertising. He also creates the various screensaver images that are projected between films.

"My goal is to have Nate, who is our host and plays the part of Skeeter [the used car salesman] in the photos I use for the screensavers, upstage himself," Terrell says.

What antics he has created, he isn't sharing, but you can expect oddball comedy rather than the crude approach that has become increasingly

Gangrene Film Festival

When: Fri. Sept. 5, General Audience Session (family-friendly), 8:30 p.m.
Late Session (PG-13 material), 11 p.m.

Where: The Ed Kenley Amphitheater (403 North Wasatch Dr., Layton)

Tickets: \$7 for one session, \$10 for both

popular in recent years.

Why are they sticking to clean material? Terrell suggests, "You have to know your audience. We reject anything that is far too crude, and still find more than enough material. I think comedy can challenge you without being insulting."

The festival is split into two sessions and the first is completely family friendly. "The later session is for darker comedy. We used to include horror films, because we're all big fans, but we learned that showing a horror between comedies ruined the mood," Terrell says.

This year's festival features 14 films which include a man carrying butter through New York City in his mouth; a tag team of a meter maid and Superman stopping a salon robbery; a guacamole rap; agoraphobics and hypochondriacs; and an actor's audition for a horror film.

It's rare that I find a reason to drive to Layton, but in the spirit of my youth, the shoddy special effects and the star-bent aspirations, this is one drive I'm going to make.



Photo courtesy of Gangrene Productions

Fear the comedy of Gangrene: Craig Nybo, Larry Nybo, Nate Peck and Mike Terrell