

Coronado Island Film Festival

A commentary by Linda L. Austin | Posted: Thursday, February 11, 2016 3:32 pm

No doubt about it, I am star struck. While I know actors, writers, producers are normal though talented people who lead somewhat regular lives, they fascinate me. Consequently, film festivals have always intrigued me; however, they seemed too illusive, too much trouble. Then along came the Coronado Island Film Festival and a friend who encouraged me to attend with her. What a great weekend for a movie buff!

The first night we were eager to see the unreleased Disney film, "The Finest Hour." Both the author and director were present and mentioned that the showing was the first time anyone had seen the finished film. Sounds like an unpublicized world premier to me. Arriving early, we had choice seats with our Ocean View pass. Sitting beside me was James Sadwith, the writer, producer, director of "Coming through the Rye," and his wife. After a friendly introductory chit-chat, he asked if we were going to see his movie. We already had it marked. When he gave me a mini poster advertising his film, I asked if he would autograph it for me. As he was writing, I mentioned it was the third autograph I had gotten in my life. When I named Joe Dimaggio and Will Ferrell as the other two, his wife beamed and said, "You've made his day!" They were cordial throughout the weekend always greeting me by name.

Jim's movie deservedly won the top film award. I volunteered to be interviewed and commented I thought the movie was perfect since I couldn't think of any way to improve it. Asked why, I said the dialogue was natural, not trivial. Every scene seemed relevant to the storyline, and the casting was flawless.

My next special moment came after the "Twist of Lemon," a live one-man show with Chris Lemon, based on his biography of his father. Chris submerged himself into his father's persona, being funny while relating biographical information. Chris's strong physical resemblance, his voice, and his mannerisms were definitely reminiscent of Jack Lemon. In addition, the script was entertaining while giving some insight into Jack Lemon's private side. Afterwards, as I was waiting for the walk sign, the Lemon group approached the crosswalk. Not being able to resist, I asked the lovely lady near me if she was Mrs. Lemon and then proceeded to compliment the performance. A few feet from the Village Theater, she interrupted our conversation with, "Would you like a picture with Chris?" Of course, I would. I'm starstruck, remember? When I pulled out my small camera, she began orchestrating where we would stand for best light and volunteered her son to take the picture.

I have already requested a pass for my Christmas gift next year. Those two incidents, coupled with thoughtful feature films, shorts, and documentaries which never relied on an R rating for appeal, were enough to lure me back. We enjoyed all twelve film presentations we saw and wished we could have fit in more. An added bonus to the weekend was meeting other local movie fans. Having a common

interest immediately drew us into conversation which led to other topics and planning to meet at the next venue.

The Opening Night Party, as well as the Filmmaker Reception and Celebrity Tribute, provided an opportunity for meeting and greeting Coronadans as well as celebrities all of whom eagerly engaged in conversation. The heavy hors d'oeuvres were Hotel Del quality.

The Hospitality Tent provided quick snacks and drinks to accommodate limited time between events. With the library, high school, Village Theater, and Hotel Del within walking distance for most of us, the convenience factor was very appealing. Those who had attended other film festivals commented on the bothersome required driving and parking between events at those places. Coronado has the population to support a film festival of the highest caliber, and the Village Theater and high school auditorium are more than acceptable. The library needs a platform for better visibility. Not having an unobstructed view of Chris Lemon, which meant shifting around to see, was annoying. However, for the first annual film festival, the committee should feel justifiably proud. I am eagerly anticipating next year!