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*"The Ashfield Film Fest is a great event that has quickly become a very popular local tradition. For me, an important part of the contest is that it inspires young people to be creative and learn new skills. I'm looking forward to seeing the imaginative films all the filmmakers—young and old—have come up with this year. Good luck to everyone!"*

~ Jim McSweeney

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## History of the Ashfield FilmFest

**ON AUGUST 12, 1881 CECIL B. DEMILLE** was born in Ashfield Massachusetts. He went on to be declared by many "the greatest showman on earth," and our town hero. In September 2007 Baby Cecil was also born in Ashfield. He has gone on to be the Grand Prize Trophy of The Ashfield FilmFest.

The FilmFest arose from a collaboration among Tamsen Merrill, Harry Keramidas and the Ashfield Cultural Council. It began as a small, fun community event to honor Mr. DeMille. Each year since 2007 (except for the Covid years) people from the hilltown communities have come together to watch feature length and short films in Ashfield's historic town hall. All the short films must be 5 minutes or less and have a direct connection to Western Massachusetts. This connection can be a principal member of the cast or crew being from Western Mass, the film being written or shot in Western Mass, or some similar, direct connection to the area.

Entries include music videos, documentaries, comedies, animation, and social commentaries. Trophies and cash prizes are awarded in several categories and are decided by a diverse panel of judges from the area. As mentioned above, the Grand Prize winner is awarded the famed Baby Cecil Trophy\* created by Ashfield artist Jane Lund. The final and highly anticipated Audience Choice Award receives a basket of goods and services donated by local businesses.

*(continued on next page)*

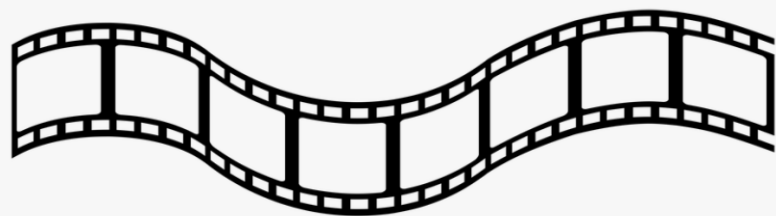
*History of the Ashfield FilmFest (cont. from previous page)*

The growing enthusiasm for the creative art of storytelling with film/video, caused the FilmFest to expand from just Ashfield to include neighboring communities. The FilmFest has now screened over 170 films, most of which were filmed within our communities by residents both young and old. You can view the archive of films on our Youtube Channel\*. The films have created a trove of local history and memories of our town. Each year the entries continue to improve, and to demonstrate the cultural and historical diversity and richness of our towns.

The FilmFest has become a treasured annual tradition, and a reason to gather with friends, perhaps dress up, and watch a new crop of films that add to our sense of wonder and amazement for the communities we live in.

\*P.S. Baby Cecil lives at Belding Memorial Library

\* <https://www.youtube.com/@ashfieldfilmfest5914/> videos



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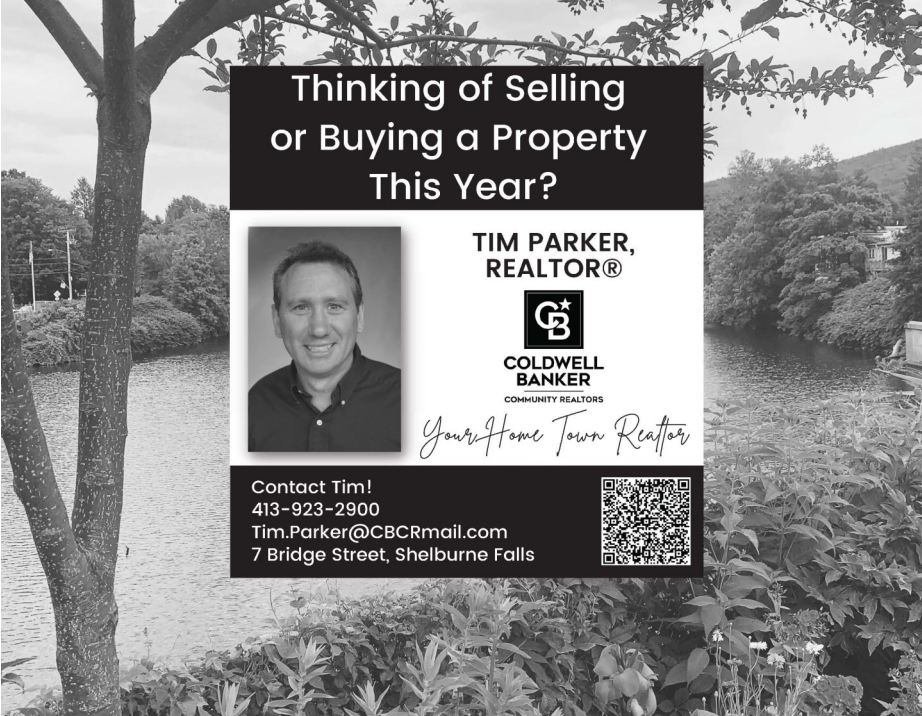


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-Attorney Buz Eisenberg




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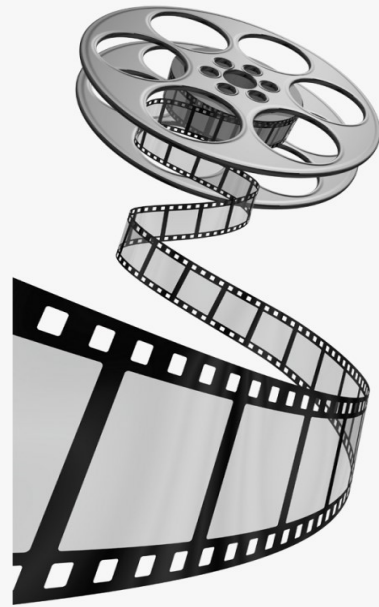
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Thank You FilmFest Committee!**



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## *And More Thanks!*

**Special Thanks** to Kurt Meyer for the beautifully crafted awards, Buz Eisenberg and Marcine Appel for the signs and decorations and again to Buz for moderating the panel of poets, the Ashfield Town Band for their rousing welcome show music, David Knowles for his amazing work on this program and help with the lighting, Ben Tobin for all his work designing the posters and the program cover, Gregory Thorpe for taking photos, and Pluto Kirilenko for his surprise impersonation of our beloved mascot.

We would also like to thank **this year's judges:** Donna Gates (Shelburne Falls), Pluto Kirilenko (Ashfield), Manat Wooten (Shelburne Falls), Robert Markey (Ashfield), and Margot Bird (Ashfield).

The Ashfield FilmFest would not exist without the wonderful volunteer group of core **FilmFest committee members** who work all year on this event. Harry Keramidas and Tamsen Merrill (Founders), Lynn Dole, Ian Hamilton, Sarah Hertel-Fernandez, Juliet Jacobson, Paul Lacinski, Brendan Leowolf, Bruce Lessels, Christopher Seward, Tamara Sloan, and Ben Tobin.

We are so very **grateful** to our participants, volunteers, the Ashfield town officials for helping make this event possible, Blackmer Insurance for covering this event, the Massachusetts Cultural Council who has helped support the festival, and above all to the **filmmakers and stars** who donated their time, talent and films to make this FilmFest a wonderful experience!





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Holly A. Wescott

"I just can't put this book down!"

oh but you must.  
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to the Film Festival.

(courtesy of young readers  
at South Ashfield Library)

*Congratulations to  
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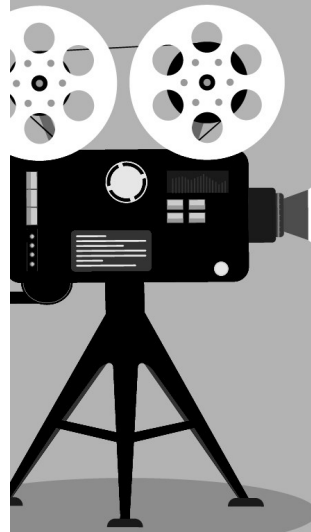
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## Ashfield FilmFest - Friday Night Documentaries

### Alice: At Home with Alice Parker, by Eduardo Montes-Bradley.

Pioneering, world-renowned composer, conductor, and teacher, Alice Parker is a champion of the power of the human voice and a hero in the world of choral music. This documentary illuminates Parker's life and art through a series of intimate conversations with filmmaker Eduardo Montes-Bradley.

Parker's reflections on her childhood and career are interspersed with stories about the creative process and collaborators behind some of her most significant works as a composer, such as *Songs for Eve* and *A Sermon from the Mountain*. Against a backdrop of the wintry mountains of Hawley Massachusetts where she makes her home, she shares her thoughts on life, morality, and the elemental and joyful importance of song.

Parker says, "It was a delight to work on this film with Eduardo. He captures well my life, my home, and the choral music that means so much to me." Following the film, Alice Parker will lead a "sing"; this is an opportunity to be initiated into a beloved choral tradition that has distinguished Parker's career of over seventy years.

### Ruth Stone's Vast Library of the Female Mind, by Nora Jacobson.

Ruth Stone was a promising young poet, living an idyllic life with her beloved husband, a poet and professor. When he died unexpectedly by suicide, Ruth was flung out into the world, destitute with three daughters to support.

Though not well known outside of the poetry world, Ruth won accolades and awards, such the National Book Award for Poetry, the Wallace Stevens Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Delmore Schwartz Award, and she was a finalist for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, among many others.

Beloved by many, Ruth's house in Goshen, Vermont became a mecca for students, poets, friends and family members. There she inspired people to make art and write, not only through activities such as the "poetry game", but by providing solace and nurture, surrounded by nature and camaraderie. Ruth came to Western Massachusetts and even Ashfield, many times to read poetry and visit with fellow poets.

*A panel discussion with local poets Jan Freeman, Abbot Cutler, and Amy Dryansky will follow the film. Moderated by Buz Eisenberg.*

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# ASHFIELD FILMFEST

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Kristin Wickline - Over the Moon Farm - Crocheted Baby Cecil Figure  
Freeman Farm - Quality Pastured Meat - Gift Bag and gifts  
Ann Brauer Quilt Studio - Quilted Potholder in Fall Colors  
Maya Nayak - Tip Top Orchard - Dried Flower Bouquet

The Ashfield FilmFest is supported in part by grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Local Cultural Councils, whose continued generosity has been an important factor in a robust and thriving art scene in Western Massachusetts.

Our advertisers are another very important source of support for the FilmFest and we enthusiastically encourage you to patronize these businesses at every opportunity and let them know that you appreciate their contribution to our program.

## —Screening List—

1. **Slow Motion Summer in the Hill Towns** Ari and Indigo Coleminer
2. **Stitching Seams** Andrea Rose
3. **Like Clay** Lily Danielyan and Norma Jean Haynes
4. **School Day** Cole and Juniper Whitaker
5. **Hilltowns Wildlife Highway** Hilltown Land Trust
6. **Carried Away By The wind** Melissa McClung
7. **Hugh and the Statue** Ben Tobin
8. **Jovie** Raven Burrell
9. **Summer Walk** Gayle Kabaker
10. **Etude** Hezekiah Fleck Sims
11. **Good News** Jake Slater
12. **The Lord of the Rings of the Old Forest** Jenny Wildermuth
13. **Slo-Mo Splash** Wyeth Miller, Leo Sasson-Fallon, Indigo Coleminer, Elliot Franetovich
14. **77** Lily and Clara Delacruz
15. **Dragon Skills** Dave Russo and Madeline Leue
16. **It Was A Dark And Stormy Night** Dan Chess
17. **At Times** Janice Sorensen
18. **Shmaniel Shmonston's Big Break** Mo Schweiger and Bella Levavi
19. **Toby** Deborah Kearny
20. **Drug Free Zone** Jonathan Mirin
21. **Claude** Peter J. Moser
22. **Take A Deep Breath** Gerard McGovern and Tamsen Merrill
23. **Misadventures With Fishing** Urso Helle Haskell Blackburn

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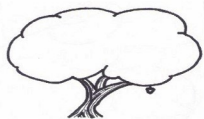


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Panelists following the screening of:

## Ruth Stone's Vast Library of the Female Mind

**Amy Dryansky** has lived in Franklin County for over 30 years, during which time she had the great good fortune of reading with Ruth Stone in Shelburne Falls when the bookstore was next to McCusker's Market. Amy's second book, *Grass Whistle* (Salmon Poetry) received the Massachusetts Book Award, and the first, *How I Got Lost So Close to Home*, won the New England/New York Award from Alice James Books. She's also received honors from the Poetry Society of America and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Individual poems appear in *Harvard Review*, *New England Review*, *Orion*, *Radar*, *The Sun*, *Tin House*, and other journals and anthologies. Amy teaches creative writing, most recently as the James Merrill Visiting Poet at Amherst College, and works as a grant writer for a regional land conservation agency.

**Abbot Cutler** has published three chapbooks: *1843 Rebecca 1847*, published by Rowan Tree Press of Boston, MA., *The Dog Isn't Going Anywhere* by Mad River Press of Richmond, MA., and *Say Dance, Say Night*, with Slate Roof Press of Franklin County. "Roosting Place of The Crows" will be out later this year from Swamp Press of Northfield. His poems have appeared in numerous publications including *Orion Magazine*, *Ploughshares*, and *Blue Sofa Review*, and in several anthologies, among them *What Have You Lost*, edited by Naomi Shihab Nye. He lives in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, with his wife, the photographer Sarah Holbrook.

**Jan Freeman** first met Ruth Stone as a graduate student at NYU in 1984. She studied with Ruth and then moved up to her home in Goshen, Vermont, for a life-changing summer of nonstop poetry. In 1996, Jan moved to South Ashfield and was the founding director of Ashfield's Paris Press (now housed at Wesleyan University Press), which published Ruth Stone's award-winning *Simplicity and Ordinary Words*. Jan is the author of three books of poetry, most recently *Blue Structure*. She completed her fourth collection, *The Odyssey of Yes and No*, during a spring fellowship at MacDowell. She teaches Zoom poetry workshops, directs the MASS MoCA Writing Through Art Poetry Retreats, and provides editorial services to poets and writers. [www.janfreeman.net](http://www.janfreeman.net).

**Buz Eisenberg, Post Screening Panel Moderator** has honed his skill as a moderator as Ashfield's Town Moderator for over two decades. As an attorney, Buz has handled a wide variety of civil, criminal, and civil rights cases in the local, regional, national, and international arenas. Currently, Buz hosts WHMP's weekday radio show, *Talk The Talk*, with Bill Newman. For 12 years Buz represented eight Guantanamo detainees, all of whom have been freed from detention. Among his recognitions are the Massachusetts Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award; the Southern Center for Human Rights Frederick Douglass Human Rights Award; the Boston Bar Association's President's Award; the National Legal Aid & Defenders Beacon of Justice Award; recognition by the Massachusetts Citizens Against the Death Penalty for his successful representation of Georgia death row inmate Kenneth B. Blanks; and an award from Western Mass Legal Services for 25 Years of Service on its Board of Directors, including as its president.

# Awards

The **Grand Prize** winner will receive \$400

The **Audience Award** winner will receive a Local Gift Basket

The following categories MAY be awarded and each receives **\$200**

- **Best Documentary**
  - **Best Comedy**
- **First Prize Youth**
- **Best Animation**
  - **Best Actor**
- **Best Music Video**
- **Best Technical**

## Awards Ceremony

A short break will be taken while the ballots are tallied. Once the results are determined, the drum will roll and all the trophies will be awarded!

### *Vote for the Audience Choice*

After viewing all the entries, use the ballot inserted in your program to vote for your favorite entry. Place your ballot in the box at the back of the hall. More ballots will be available.



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# North Wind Stone Work

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