

# Film Festival kicks off

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Lights were dimmed in several downtown Beloit businesses as the ninth annual Beloit International Film Festival began Friday evening.

This year the festival has been lengthened to 10 days, and will mainly be focused in Beloit rather than having films in Janesville and Rockford as in previous years.

As with last year, online ticket sales seem to be growing with each festival, said BIFF board member Rick McGrath.

“We’re just starting to see a spike in ticket purchases,” McGrath said Friday evening prior to the start of the festival. McGrath said one film, “Things Found on the Ground,” had sold out by Friday evening.

The comedy/drama tells the story about “relationships crumbling, rebuilding themselves and ultimately being tested,” the BIFF website says. McGrath said filmmaker Carol Brandt is local to the area and a lot of family and friends are going to see it. The first viewing is tonight at 5 p.m. at My Apartment, 429 East Grand Ave. The film will also be shown at noon on Sunday also at My Apartment.

Andrew Britton, a 2006 Beloit Memorial High School graduate, also showed his film “When the King Tilts” at Cafe Fromage on Friday night. The showing nearly sold out with about 36 tickets pre-sold. Britton said before the screening he knew several people in the audience that came to support him.

Christine and Bob Gunderson said they’ve known Britton’s family for a long time and came to support his film. Christine said they are usually down south this time of year, and haven’t gotten to come to BIFF until this year.

“We will probably see a few more films, but we need to look at the schedule,” she said.

Likewise, Chris Zahn said this was his first time attending BIFF, although he had a short film play at the festival in its first year. Zahn said he also came to support Britton. Zahn said he lives in Milwaukee and wasn’t able to attend the festival when his film was showing due to working on another project.

The film is about two women who stop by a bed and breakfast looking for a place for next year’s family reunion. The women befriend the owner Sam, played by Logan Lark, who helped co-produce the film with Britton, and get to know him and his “secretive life.” The film “explores obscure hidden corners of the human psyche” and how people react when “faced with the unknown.”

Britton said this was his first feature film, but did show a short film at BIFF in 2008. Britton said he and Lark talked about topics for the feature.

“He told me he was running this bed and breakfast...and I thought that’s our setting and we started working around that topic,” he said.

Filming took place in September 2012 and the final cut of the film was complete in the summer, Britton said. The film debuted at the Milwaukee Film Festival in October earning a Special Jury Prize for acting for Lark.

The film is also showing on Sunday at 5 p.m. at Domenico’s. Many of the popular events are scheduled next weekend including the sing-a-long “Sound of Music” event at at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at the Eclipse Center. The always popular silent movie showcase will be on on Feb. 22 at the Eclipse Center. The reception and silent auction start at 6:30 p.m. and the film starts at 7 p.m. This year the features three short films by Charlie Chaplin as well as an original score performed by the Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra.