

# Fremont reels in first film festival about presidents

[Craig Shoup](#), Fremont News-Messenger Published 1:12 p.m. ET Sept. 14, 2018 | Updated 2:14 p.m. ET Sept. 18, 2018

***Events will include film competition, lectures, screenings***



*(Photo: Submitted)*

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FREMONT - As local attorney Joe Albrechta attended film festivals from Arizona to Cleveland over the years, he realized there were no national film festivals about American presidents.

After three years of putting the pieces together, The American Presidents Film and Literary Festival was born and will make its debut in Fremont at the end of the month.

"I've been to festivals and watched what they did for communities and with (Rutherford B.) Hayes, we have the stage," Albrechta said.

As the home of the nation's first presidential library, it did not take long for many agencies including Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museums, Learning and Liberty Foundation of Fremont City Schools to get involved.

The festival runs from Sept. 27 through Oct. 7 and features a film competition, guest lectures on presidencies, and special screenings of the HBO miniseries "John Adams" that aired in 2008.

The miniseries will be capped off by a speech from the series' writer Kirk Ellis from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. at The Strand Concert Theatre.

Many of the events are free, Rutherford B. Hayes Library and Museum Marketing and Communications Manager Kristina Smith said.



**Kirk Ellis** (Photo: Submitted)

Festival events will be spread out through downtown Fremont, with film screenings and lectures held at Birchard Public Library, 423 Croghan St.; Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museums, corner of Hayes and Buckland Ave.; Fremont Middle School, 1250 North St.; The Strand Concert Theatre, 220 S. Front St.; Live Edge Center, 115 S. Front St., and downtown Fremont along Front Street during the Crop Circle Festival beginning Oct. 5.

A full list of scheduled events can be found at [americanpresidentsfilmfestival.com](http://americanpresidentsfilmfestival.com).

Smith said many of the lecture programs will be held twice during the festival, allowing guests a chance to find a time that fits their schedule.

The festival competition gets underway Oct. 5 with film screenings at The Strand from 5 to 6:30 p.m. with Bowling Green State University professor emeritus Jack Nachbar presenting "Fascists, Fools and Action Heroes: Fictional Presidents in Three Movie Periods.

"The Astronot" will be screened at 5:15 p.m. Oct. 5 on the second floor of the Hayes Presidential Library and Museums.

The feature-length film is the only fiction feature at the festival, and is about a man longing to reach the moon in 1969.

The short-film category at the festival will explore topics like fracking and how it relates to the 1880s cattle boom and bust with Teddy Roosevelt, called "Teddy Roosevelt and Fracking."

"I think the festival is special because we have a lot of independent films and literary works," Smith said.

The other two short films are called "The Republican Movie," about a rising star in the GOP who's set on shaking things up in Washington D.C., and "Writing the Peace," a movie set in 1945 about a document that helped end World War II.

Films in competition will be judged by Kirk Baird, pop culture editor, film critic and media writer for The Toledo Blade; Jeffrey Brown, an associate professor in the department of popular culture at Bowling Green State University, and Nachbar.

Two documentary films will play at the festival, one called "Murder of a President," a PBS documentary about James Garfield, and "The Reagan Show," an archive-footage documentary about the former president's dealings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

As the festival grows, Albrechta said he hopes the film competition expands to include important social issues like free speech, schools and gun control.

The sub theme is people, places and power," Albrechta said. "We are hoping to expand next year to include Terra State Community College and Paramount Cinema."

Albrechta said patience will be key in growing the festival.

"It took Cleveland more than 40 years to gain popularity," he said. "Our hope is that Fremont can have a national identity."

### **What to know**

Volunteers are still needed to work festival events. To help, call 419-332-2081.

Tickets start at \$5 for individual film blocks, or can be purchased for \$20 in a three-day film block or as part of a \$65 package that allows visitors to access all films and events, including a wine tasting and lantern tour of Spiegel Grove.

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