



## Lights, camera, action! Groton Film Society holding first screening Dec. 1

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GROTON -- Could the Station Avenue downtown redevelopment district be home to an independent movie theater where locals can catch art-house films?

That's what Scott Stathis envisions.

It's a dream that Stathis and other founders of the Groton Film Society would like to turn into a reality someday, now that the nonprofit organization's membership is growing larger than they ever expected.

"Groton has a real interest in increasing cultural offerings," Stathis said as he announced the organization's first screening event.

The film society will screen The World's Fastest Indian, a 2005 film starring Anthony Hopkins, on Dec. 1, at 7 p.m., at Lawrence Academy. It will be the first official public event for the society, which was formed by six local enthusiasts over the summer.

The group initially thought about creating a for-profit movie theater to showcase artistic films that are rarely shown at large-scale movie theaters. But they quickly discovered that such a project would cost \$500,000 or more, and switched gears to form a nonprofit group to screen artistic films at different

venues around the town on a regular basis.

The society publicized itself at GrotonFest in September, and there were soon 50 committed members and \$2,000 from membership fees -- enough to pay for the first screening events and buy insurance.

Lawrence Academy and the Groton School then offered to help, because faculty members had expressed interest in enjoying screenings after school, according to Stathis.

Representatives from both schools were unavailable for comment.

Like many future events, the screening on Dec. 1 will start with an introduction of the film by a guest speaker, and will be followed by an in-depth discussion.

There will also be a "mix and mingle," with hors d'oeuvres and refreshments before the screening.

The idea to hold such an event has excited local merchants.

Levent Bozkurt, a Groton resident who owns Stonehedge Inn & Spa and Left Bank Restaurant in Tyngsboro, decided to hold a wine-tasting event in combination with the screenings.

Bozkurt will select some of the 104,000 bottles of wines kept at his restaurant for each event, depending on the theme of a movie, season and snacks to be served.

Bozkurt said Groton residents have been hungry for this type of activity. The film society's events will help satisfy inquisitive minds and "open their minds for the world," he said.

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Encouraged by growing support, Stathis and other group members are looking to recruit another 50 members. Their goal is to create enough interest for having a theater so that the group can raise money for the project or attract a theater company to open a movie theater in Groton, Stathis said.

The cost for membership is \$150 a year, \$100 for senior citizens and \$50 for students, with discount rates available for couples and those who buy two-year memberships. A lifetime membership is \$1,000.

The Dec. 1 event begins with a reception at 7 at Lawrence Academy's Williams Arts Center. The screening begins in the recital hall at 8. For more information, go to <http://www.grotonfilmsociety.org>.

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