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## WSP filmmaker 'makes good' at festival

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The view from a soap box car racing down a St. Paul street introduces history buffs and film lovers to Joe Garelick, a Greatest Generation and the subject of West St. Paul resident Angela Andrist's short film, "Soap Box Derby Champion: Boy Makes Good." Andrist won Best Emerging Filmmaker and a \$1,000 prize for her short film at the Minnesota Historical Society's "Moving Pictures" film competition, Oct. 17.

The story Andrist crafted in three parts shows viewers the life of a skinny, dark-haired St. Paul boy who raced soap box cars in the 1930s, flew B-24 Liberator bombers as a young man in World War II, and returned home to invent and manufacture the first boat ladders used on Lake Minnetonka and beyond.

The competition is part of the Minnesota Historical Society's Greatest Generation project, and invites both amateurs and professionals to submit 10-minute films based on the lives of Minnesota's "Greatest Generation." The thematic prompt this year was "Boom of the 1950s."

Andrist, age 43, promotes wellness at Staywell Health Management in Eagan, and has been a resident of West St. Paul for 20 years. In her free time, she started pursuing writing, photography and film to create work/life balance, and takes classes at the Center for Media Arts and through the St. Paul Neighborhood Network, which is where she borrowed the thousands of dollars worth of cameras and equipment to make the film. (Shhh, that opening shot was captured by dangling the expensive camera out the window of Andrist's car.)

Andrist used photographs, footage of Garelick, and parts of a documentary by one of Garelick's fellow World War II pilots to craft her film.

Festival Director Randal Dietrich said they came across the story idea while doing research for a 2009 exhibit on the Greatest Generation, and passed the idea on to Andrist, something they also do with other eager filmmakers looking for a story. Dietrich described Andrist as an enthusiastic filmmaker, and Garelick as an enthusiastic subject, which made for a great match.

Dietrich said that filmmakers from smaller communities have been strong participants in the festival, and described the contestants as geographically diverse. Several filmmakers from South

St. Paul participated in the competition, he said. The winning film was from Moorhead.

The Historical Society's Greatest Generation Project began in 2005, marking the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. Each film, picture, interview and text recorded for the project takes care to document the lives of Minnesotans who grew up during the Depression of the 1930s, became young men and women during World War II, and rallied for the cultural and economic boom that followed the end of the war.

The competition is open to all ages and abilities, and the emerging filmmaker's category is targeted toward those with little or no experience and those who produce their film with basic equipment. Despite that, Andrist was surprised to win, having figured that with 52 other films in the competition, she had a mere 2.5 percent chance of taking home a prize. Andrist took up the project just four weeks before the competition started, and "Soap Box Derby Champion" is her first film.

"Joe Garelick's personality really came through in the film, ... his honesty, his sense of self," said Dietrich. "She covers all of these things really well in the film."

For her next project, Andrist wants to find a collaborator rather than go it alone. She does credit Garelick's daughter-in-law Lori Fink-Garelick, a producer at WCCO, for her feedback and for helping bridge the generations. Andrist also thanks a neighborhood boy who provided the soap box car sound effects by riding his skateboard down the street. In fact, out of her prize money, Andrist has promised him and his friends a pizza party.

With hopes of making more films, Andrist plans to put some of her prize money toward her own film equipment. "I think a lot of times in life you don't get encouragement to follow your dreams," explained Andrist, "I think the universe is saying keep doing this."

"Moving Pictures" presented by Comcast, will be part of the Society's collection. Showings of the films are scheduled across the state in addition to on TV.

Wentworth Library will be showing four films from the collection, including Andrist's, at 7 p.m. on Nov. 5. The films will also be available On-Demand through Comcast.

The TPT channel will present a showcase featuring the five-award winning films, as well as personal insights from each of the winning filmmakers, at 8 p.m. on Nov. 9.

To find more information on Moving Pictures including other showings, visit [www.mnhs.org/people/mngg/film](http://www.mnhs.org/people/mngg/film) [1].

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