

# Sunnyside Shorts Film Festival Slated For Sept. 9

BY THOMAS COGAN

Sherry Gamlin and Teresa Ward did not start out as a production team for the Sunnyside Shorts Film Festival, but they're a team now and will present this year's festival at 8 p.m., Sunday, September 9 in Sunnyside Gardens Park, 39th Avenue and 49th Street. It is billed on the flyers they are currently spreading all over town as "an evening of short, original films by independent filmmakers, including some of Sunnyside's own". Filmmakers outside Sunnyside, Gamlin said, come from other parts of the city, other domestic localities and abroad. "Thanks to e-mails, word spreads," she explained about attracting participants.

The festival was started in 2001 by a local chapter of the Humanist Center of Cultures. At the outset, it had a multicultural theme that has been largely retained, even though the organization no longer sponsors the festival. A festival film might, for instance, be a movie made by teenagers from various countries reflecting their various experiences. Gamlin first found out about the festival when she saw a Humanist Center flyer posted in a laundromat on Skillman Avenue asking for persons interested in filmmaking. Being an actress with such an interest, she responded and wound up taking classes conducted at the Sunnyside Community Center on 39th

Street. Since then, she has made three films, though none will be shown at the current festival, since all her time is being spent promoting the event.

One of her films was made at a street fair on Greenpoint Avenue. Entitled "Free Advice", it showed Gamlin and companions set up at a table, ready to offer answers, at no charge, to any questions passersby wanted to ask. "Where can I find a man?" one woman asked, and they pointed out social functions she might get interested in that could put her in touch with others, men included. When one inquirer asked what could be done about graffiti in the neighborhood, Gamlin urged the person to get connected to SUNN, the Sunnyside United Neighborhood Network, a group dedicated to graffiti cleanup.

Teresa Ward got into filmmaking a short while after Gamlin, taking classes at Sunnyside Community Center and shooting a documentary in 2002, entering it in the festival the same year. That work showed both Mexicans and Koreans in Sunnyside viewing the 2002 World Cup soccer tournament, held in Korea. She said it was a great human interest experience to show the enthusiasm and ultimately the disappointment of both groups as they followed their national teams on television. With the withdrawal of the sponsorship of the Humanist Center of Cultures, she and

Gamlin were drawn together to keep the festival going.

The first Sunnyside Shorts Film Festival was presented at All Saints' Church on 46th Street. Prior to this year, it has also been staged in Sunnyside Gardens Park and Doughboy Park in Woodside. The September 9 event, again in Sunnyside Gardens Park and free of charge, will be about two hours in length, with an intermission. Gamlin and Ward said that the films to be shown, none of which will be more than 15 minutes long, include at least one animated film, a dance film from Topaz Arts in Woodside and possibly a film about Sunnyside Gardens itself. The two producers said that films directed toward children would be shown early, while those parents might not want their kids to watch would be shown later.

Gamlin and Ward expressed their appreciation of City Councilmember Eric Gioia, who obtained a cultural grant from the council that enabled them to keep the festival enterprise going. For the future, Ward expressed a wish that potential filmmakers of all ages give the event a try. The young are expected to do so, but she encourages the old to participate also; she said, for instance, that the Sunnyside Community Center might have some senior filmmakers among its members.

The flyer advertising this year's festival, strikingly reminiscent of posters from Russia some 90 years ago, was designed and printed by Sunnyside artist Ciara Elend.

## Children's Mexican Dance At Calpulli

Calpulli Children's Dance Workshop fall and winter sessions begin September 8 and continue through December 8 on Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Mestizo Art Center, 36-50 38th St. in Astoria.

Children 5 to 8 and 8 to 13 years of age will participate in culturally-enriching classes based on Mexican dance. The classes focus on regional dances from Mexico along with lessons in history, culture, language, and dance movement. Families are invited to bring their children to this unique arts experience made up of fun, exercise, and learning.

Calpulli Mexican Dance Co. is a not-for-profit organization based in Queens. Its mission is to teach and produce dance based programming incorporating live music and theatre to promote a diverse image of Mexican cultural heritage. For more information, go to [info@calpullidance.org/children.htm](mailto:info@calpullidance.org/children.htm) or call 718-507-2617.

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