



FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Hello to all our members.

By the time you read this, it will be Oscar morning.

Film fans across the world will cheer or curse the results, lament the snubs and argue bitterly about the Academy Awards' modern relevance.

I'm more invested in this year's Oscars than usual, as I've seen five of the nine Best Picture nominees.

I hope Bong Joon-ho's darkly hilarious, superbly-paced social satire *Parasite* wins Best Picture – which would make it the first ever non-English language film to win – but I would also be happy if Taika Waititi's absurd yet hard-hitting comedy *Jojo Rabbit* or Sam Mendes' harrowing one-take war movie *1917* win.

While I found Todd Phillips' *Joker* to be an enthralling character study reminiscent of *There Will Be Blood* and *Aguirre: The Wrath of God*, I would be somewhat disappointed if *Joker* won Best Picture, as I enjoyed the above films far more. Some of my cinephile friends have also made a strong case that such a relentlessly nihilistic film should not win Best Picture. Arthur Fleck heals by embracing his madness as the Joker, but the film **shouldn't frame this as a good thing**.

I will be very annoyed if Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* wins Best Picture. While this film had outstanding atmosphere and a deeply compelling core in Rick Dalton's (Leonardo DiCaprio) character arc as an ageing movie star, the plot was bloated and undisciplined, with several redundant characters and a tacked-on third act involving the Manson Family cult.

I can't comment on the other four nominees – I do really want to see *Little Women* and *Marriage Story*, *The Irishman* doesn't interest me, and I don't give a damn about *Ford v Ferrari*.

I hope Bong Joon-ho wins Best Director, as *Parasite* is so tightly-paced and ingeniously constructed, but this Oscar will very likely go to Sam Mendes for *1917* due to its extremely complicated one-take presentation. *Joker* was very well-directed but very derivative of earlier anti-hero films such as *Taxi Driver* and *The King of Comedy* (and feels very similar to the far superior *You Were Never Really Here* by Lynne Ramsay). Quentin Tarantino really shouldn't win Best Director for how overlong and scattershot *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* was.

The breathtakingly beautiful horror film *Midsommar* should have been nominated for Best Cinematography. The endlessly witty *Booksmart* should have been nominated for Best Original Screenplay. *Doctor Sleep* should have been nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay, as it succeeded remarkably in both adapting the source Stephen King novel and integrating details from Stanley Kubrick's famous film adaptation of *The Shining*. *The Nightingale* was, by far, my favourite film of 2019, but it's technically a 2018 release, so it doesn't qualify for this year's Oscars.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on my Oscar hopes and snubs, and if you follow the Oscars, I hope you see the results you wanted.

We have some very exciting Film Society events rapidly approaching, including our first regular screenings for the year, the French-themed Healesville Mini Film Festival in March and the Warburton Film Festival in June.

I hope you have a great 2020.

2020'S GENERAL PROGRAM

February:	<i>The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared</i>	2013 Swedish comedy
March:	<i>Secrets and Lies</i>	1996 British drama
April:	<i>Living Is Easy With Eyes Closed</i>	2013 Spanish comedy-drama
May:	<i>Amour</i>	2013 French drama-romance
June:	<i>Goldstone</i>	2016 Australian Western
July:	<i>Arctic</i>	2018 Icelandic thriller
August:	<i>The Last Suit</i>	2018 Argentinian drama
September:	<i>The Crying Game</i>	1992 British-Irish thriller
October:	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	1940 American drama
November:	<i>The Secret in their Eyes</i>	2009 Spanish-Argentinian crime drama
December:	<i>What's Up Doc?</i>	1972 American comedy

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Regular:	\$70
Concession:	\$65
Youth Membership (Under 25):	\$35

Anyone who hasn't yet renewed their Film Society membership can renew it at *February's* screenings in **Healesville** and **Warburton**.

You can pay in *cash, cheque* or by *EFTPOS*.

We also urge you to encourage friends and family to join the Society.

2020 HEALESVILLE MINI FILM FESTIVAL - 15 March 2020

9:45 am	<i>Custody</i>	2017	93 mins (approx.)	Rated M
1:00 pm	<i>Who You Think I Am</i>	2019	101 mins (approx.)	Rated MA15+
3:15 pm	<i>Just To Be Sure</i>	2017	100 mins (approx.)	Rated M

The event will have a *lavish French-themed lunch* catered by **Susanna Luebbers Catering**, with a maximum of 60 seats/diners.

You are **required to book ahead if you want to attend the lunch**. You can book in person at the Healesville and Warburton cinemas or online through a link on the Yarra Ranges Film Society website.

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Healesville-Mini-Film-Festival>

The lunch is charged separately from the films themselves.

The *booking deadline* is **March 10**.

FILM SOCIETY DVD LIBRARY

The DVD library will reopen at this month's screenings.

You can browse our rental catalogue on the Film Society website, then reserve your desired DVDs through the curator at the respective Warburton and Healesville screenings. The curator will then bring your reserved DVDs to the next screening for you to collect.

You can find the catalogue through this link:

<https://www.yarrarangesfilmsociety.org.au/section-1-film-library.html>

STAR RATINGS AND REVIEW FOR *LOCAL HERO*



3.4 from Healesville

3.9 from Warburton's viewers

3.65 overall

My rating: 3 out of 5

Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero*, an endearing but lightweight comedy-drama about the collision of small-town life with industrial progress, has limp suspense and some problematic elements.

The film has a slow, languid pace, but this produces a very comfortable atmosphere, and it's gratifying to watch high-strung corporate executive Mac (Peter Riegert) slowly relax and embrace wholesome, simple town life in Ferness, a change reflected in his scruffier appearance. Mac's boss Felix Happer's (Burt Lancaster) interest in astrology is well-established and pays off cleverly in the climax, in which a dignified compromise is reached between industry and conservation, with Happer resolving to create an astronomical research facility instead of an on-shore oil refinery.

Local Hero has a generally cosy feel with plenty of dry, natural humour, but it's distinctly lacking in suspense beyond Mac's personal attachment to Ferness. Accountant Gordon Urqhart (Dennis Lawson), who works out the land deal with Mac, and the villagers themselves are all pretty receptive to the lucrative deal, and the sage hermit Ben Knox (Fulton Mackay) is introduced and quickly resolved as a dramatic obstacle.

I also disliked a couple of disquieting plot elements.

Mac's friend and colleague Danny (Peter Capaldi) is attracted to marine researcher Marina (Jenny Seagrove), and grows closer to her by claiming that he's working on getting a marine research station built on the Ferness coast. When Happer arrives at Ferness and decides to build an astronomy station, Danny persuades him to establish a marine research station as well. Danny's initial claim toward Marina ultimately turns out to be true, but it troubles me that Danny ends up validated after lying to Marina.

Happer's therapist Dr Moritz (Norman Chancer) displays a bizarre combination of fawning deference and an almost fetishistic enjoyment in insulting and belittling Happer. Moritz feels like a pointlessly mean gay stereotype, which is pretty offputting when you

remember that *Local Hero* was released in 1983, in the middle of the AIDS crisis and the associated rise in homophobia.

Local Hero is a comfortable, charming film with strong performances, but has meagre suspense and some uncomfortable elements.

FRITZ'S POEM

The bigshots in the city in the US of A
Versus the countryfolk by a Scottish bay.
Progress, the flow of money and oil
And how an old man this progress can foil.
Negotiations, rather than a fight,
A meteor shower, the northern light.
Personal interactions, relationships
And near the water how easy one slips.
The unstoppable progress left hanging in the air,
Shells and a phonebox a confusing affair.
The drive for change impossible to stop
Like here in Warby the 1k drop.



F.R.
19 December

FEBRUARY'S SCREENING

The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared
2013 Swedish comedy Rated M 112 minutes (approx.)



WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday February 11
HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday February 18

Based on the bestselling novel by Swedish author Jonas Jonasson, this is a madcap historical comedy with a mild Forrest Gump vibe, as the tenacious protagonist Allan (Robert Gustaffson) finds himself caught in a dizzying number of significant events across the twentieth century.

MARCH'S SCREENING

Secrets and Lies

1996 British drama Rated PG 142 minutes (approx.)

WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday March 10

HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday March 17