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Our say: Editor's notebook

By THE CAPITAL EDITORIAL BOARD

'PIP & ZASTROW' -- Often the documentarians - not the fiction-makers from Hollywood - have the best eye for stories. Victoria Bruce and Karin Hayes certainly came up with a great one when they decided to do a film on the enduring friendship of former mayor Roger "Pip" Moyer and longtime civic activist Joseph "Zastrow" Simms.

The friendship made a dramatic difference to Annapolis in spring 1968, after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed in Memphis and rioting erupted in African-American neighborhoods across the country.

It didn't happen here, largely because Mr. Moyer walked the streets of Annapolis' black neighborhoods, simply talking to people. With him was Mr. Simms, who had been facing burglary charges and was on furlough from a Baltimore jail. Between the two of them, they did the city an enormous service.

A four-minute trailer for the documentary got an enthusiastic response at last weekend's Martin Luther King Breakfast. The filmmakers hope to have it finished by next year.

We're wishing them well not just out of local pride, but because the story has a larger value for Americans. Lots of communities have everyday heroes like Mr. Simms and Mr. Moyer, and this film could be a way of honoring them all - and offering an example for the future.

COMING SOON -- The idea behind "Pip & Zastrow" certainly cheers us up a lot more than the release of Touchstone Pictures' "Annapolis," scheduled for next week. If the documentary is made, there will be at least one film about Annapolis that actually has something to do with Annapolis.



The upcoming big-budget movie, although supposedly about a Naval Academy midshipman, was filmed in Philadelphia and Princeton, N.J., owing to state financial incentives and academy reservations about the script. Judging from the trailer, the film takes place in an alternate universe where the academy is crowded with Greco-Roman buildings.

We know: Hollywood's fiction films are make-believe, not documentaries. "Dr. Zhivago," the supreme movie about Russia for people of a certain age, had to be filmed (for Cold War political reasons) in Spain, Finland and the Canadian Rockies. And there have been a couple of movies in which Annapolis stood in for Washington, D.C.

Still, to paraphrase one of the heroes of another movie not made in Annapolis: We have a bad feeling about this.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BEN -- As long as we're on the subject of Philadelphia, we should extend belated birthday wishes to Benjamin Franklin. He would have been 300 this week if the fates doled out life spans proportionate to merit.

Not that he didn't make incredibly good use of the 84 years he had. He was a statesman, writer, scientist, political thinker and pioneering journalist (who trained Jonas Green, the second publisher of this newspaper). Even the recent series of excellent biographies barely had room for all Franklin's accomplishments.

He was also a charming man who never lost his tolerant amusement at human foibles. When he ate at what is now the Treaty of Paris restaurant, you can be sure that everyone wanted to be at his table.

You'd think Hollywood would want to do a movie about Ben Franklin. No doubt it would be filmed on location in Bulgaria.

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