

The 15th Annual Beaufort International Film Festival Goes Live



By Mark Shaffer, Editor at Large

Around this time last year as the Beaufort International Film Festival was coming to the end of another record-breaking run, the term “COVID 19” was rapidly becoming part of the worldwide public lexicon. Ron and Rebecca Tucker – like most people – thought that whatever this thing was, it would certainly run its course by summer’s end. And then like the hackneyed plot of a Sci-Fi “B” movie, the world went into lockdown. The virus spread, and . . . well, we all know the rest. The Tuckers, who run the festival via the Beaufort Film Society, have parlayed BIFF into a destination event during a traditionally slow time for business in Beaufort. If at all possible, the Tuckers felt the show must go on.

“As much as we love the films and filmmakers, the whole reason we have the festival is to bring people here to see Beaufort,” says Ron. “If there was a chance we could do it in person, we

wanted to hold on to that option.”

That meant pushing the deadline for entries to the absolute last second as filmmakers struggled to complete



films in the new shared landscape of isolation and virtual reality.

Meanwhile as the Tuckers considered their options 2020 rolled on from bad to worse and 2019's landmark accomplishment seemed farther and farther away. That fall the indie romantic comedy, *Stars Fell On Alabama* filmed in Beaufort with the Tuckers co-producing through the BFS.

[The film, co-produced and directed respectively by BIFF alumni Uyen Le and VW Scheich](#) fulfilled the BFS mission to bring features back to the Lowcountry.

But that was in “the way back” before facemasks became the century's hottest fashion accessory and toilet paper was scarce as an actual fact. Even so, the finished film screened a year later for socially distanced cast & crew at Tabby Place. By that point, the festival's long time home at the USCB Center for the



