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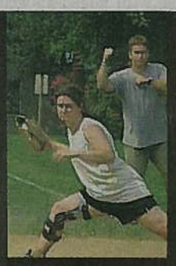

A New Film Festival Puts the Spotlight On Washington's Less-Familiar Faces and Places

[VIDEO ON THE WEB]

See Our City film clips at *www.washingtonpost.com/source.*

DIRECTOR'S CUT

By Joe Heim
Washington Post Staff Writer

Official Washington holds few surprises. The city the rest of the world sees, with its museums and institutions all wrapped in tourist-friendly bows, is territory well-trodden. But stray from the manicured Mall into the city's far-flung neighborhoods and oft-bypassed side streets, and suddenly D.C. can seem much less familiar. Not everyone you meet is obsessing about the election or dissecting the minutiae of the latest spending bill. Bureaucratic doublespeak and the air of prognosticators give way to neighborly friendliness and even welcome frankness. Here, official Washington incorporates, and the lives and stories of people who call the city home emerge.

A good starting point to immerse yourself in official Washington is the first Our City film Festival, a day-long screening of locally based documentaries next Sunday at Busboys and Poets. Presented by Yachad (*www.yachad-dc.org*), a Jewish nonprofit group that focuses on repairing homes for low- and middle-income homeowners in the Washington area, the 11 films introduce a memorable cast of characters, from bike messengers and former dope fiends to U Street barbers and kickball aficionados. The festival is the brainchild of Yachad's Kendra Rubinfield, 24, who sees it not only as a way to generate interest among young people in her organization's work, but as an opportunity to showcase docs that present aspects of life in the nation's capital that are rarely explored.

"Washington is much more than politicians and bad traffic and monuments," Rubinfield says. "It's full of subcultures and personalities and interesting groups, and the festival is a way of promoting and encouraging pride in the city. D.C.'s cool, and we want to keep it that way."

Even for longtime Washingtonians who think they know their city well, the festival's films offer revelations. And for residents who operate only in "official" Washington, these docs should be required viewing.

Turn to **Page 4** to meet four of the directors and find out how you can see all the films.