

Hatchfest ends in style

By [KAYLEY MENDENHALL](#) Chronicle Staff Writer

The Hatchfest final award ceremony Sunday night gave Bozeman a chance to get dressed up in honor of movies, art and music.

Complete with a red carpet, spotlights, camera crews and screaming fans, the Ellen Theater hosted the end of four days filled with film screenings, panel discussions and lots of parties.

"This is exciting," said Margot Kidder, pausing on the red carpet to have her photo taken. "It's like the old days in L.A. Look at the lights."

Kidder, Jeff Bridges, Bill Pullman and the star of the show, Peter Fonda, were all on hand to support Bozeman's first audiovisual arts festival.

Fonda received the first annual Gary Cooper Spirit of Montana Award for his dedication to helping aspiring filmmakers. He was presented the award by Bridges, a long-time friend.

"I'm so excited about what this festival means to Montana," Bridges said. "That is, to bring more movies up here for one thing, and to inspire young talent in the state."

The theme of the night was mentorship and each celebrity got a chance on stage to take a shot at defining the word.

Pullman cracked up the crowd with a his take on mentorship, saying he knows only that it's not a legal contract, nor is it stealing another person's work.

"It's the thing that artists do to other artists so you're not so lonely," Pullman said.

Defining the concept of mentorship was a little easier for Bridges who said without a doubt that Peter Fonda has been a mentor to him. He told the story of first meeting Fonda in the office of an agent they shared at a time when Fonda was trying to sell the idea of "Easy Rider."

The movie, he said, was a smash hit and launched the careers of Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson.

"It launched more than that. It launched an example, not that you can do drugs and operate a motorcycle ... something more than that," Bridges said. "If you think it, you can do it."

Fonda taught him to dream, Bridges said, to take risks and to do the type of movies that interest him rather than falling into roles that fit a certain mold.

"It is my pleasure to present the first Gary Cooper Spirit of Montana Award to my friend, my colleague and yes, my mentor, Mr. Peter Fonda," Bridges announced.

Wiping a hand across his brow, Fonda took to the podium and squinted into the lights. Bridges clapped him on the back as the two surveyed the clay model of what will be Fonda's bronze Gary Cooper sculpture by Ennis native David Lemon.

"I have Golden Globes. I've been nominated for Academy Awards ... There is no fellow named Oscar," Fonda said. "But geezers, the Gary Cooper Award. I knew him."

Cooper, who was born and raised in Montana, was friends with Fonda's father, Henry Fonda. Hatch organizers named the award after Cooper because his success as an actor has inspired young Montana artists for generations.

"That's what Hatch is all about," said Penny Ronning, Hatch executive director. "It's about making dreams come true."

Along with honoring Fonda, the ceremony also recognized the work of student filmmakers giving awards for best editing, best screenplay, best cinematography and best direction.

"This is really terrific," said Todd Jeffery, a student director who's film "Shooter" won three awards. "I will be coming back to the festival with or without a film here."

Jeffery also won a \$25,000 scholarship from Moonlight Basin toward his education.

Now that Hatch is off the ground, Ronning said, the goal is to continue with the annual festival and start a year-round program called Hatch labs that will bring professionals to Montana on a regular basis to meet with students.

Although organizers joked about the technical difficulties they experienced throughout the week, those closely involved with the production said the festival was a success.

"We truly feel blessed that this festival is happening -- by the skin of our teeth as many of you know," said Yarrow Kraner, Hatch president. "It's soon to be the coolest festival of all time."