

THANK YOU!



Recommendations

"I have been absolutely amazed at the work you've produced this season for our socials. Never in my time at the Festival have I seen such incredible coverage like this and I really do feel our success this year is largely in part of really making the Festival been seen and constantly present across channels. You clearly have such talent and passion for this and I am confident continued success will follow you wherever you go. You bring so much enthusiasm and energy wherever you go, and I hope those traits are something you always treasure."

"Great job with the social media stuff this year! Loved the presence on all platforms!"



Jenny Mays · 1st

Managing Director at Virginia Film Festival

November 10, 2022, Jenny managed leah directly

I am lucky to work with Leah leading up to and during the Virginia Film Festival's 2022 season. She supports social media and digital marketing for the VAFF, and every single day she brings endless creativity, a zest for learning, and genuine enthusiasm to our team. Her work is innovative and also highly successful in terms of increasing our engagement, audiences, and impressions across all platforms.



Jenny Gardiner · 1st

Published author; Publishing coach; freelance writer; Volunteer Coordinator, Virginia Film Festival

November 17, 2022, Jenny worked with leah on the same team

Leah did a really fabulous job of promoting the Virginia Film Festival through a variety of social media outlets--I heard so many positive comments from people who read what she was putting out and much of garnered reactions from readers. She was also a very enthusiastic colleague who worked hard to achieve her goals while at the film festival.



Scott Hamler · 1st

Owner of Forezee Marketing Solutions

November 28, 2022, Scott was leah's client

Leah does a great job with content creation and social media marketing and management!

Mapping Our Digital Ecosystem

9/1/2022

10/3/2022

11/11/2022

GAINS

Facebook (10,716)	Facebook 10,905	Facebook* 11,070 / 11,956	354
Flicker (47)	Flicker (47)	Flicker 48	1
Instagram (3,215)	Instagram 3,270	Instagram 3,680	465
LinkedIn (164)	LinkedIn 199	LinkedIn 255	91
Pinterest (140)	Pinterest (140)	Pinterest (140)	0
TikTok (10)	TikTok 24	TikTok 44	44
Twitter (4,502)	Twitter 4,527	Twitter 4,569	67
WordFly (16,458)	WordFly 16,746	WordFly 18,367	1,909
YouTube (393)	YouTube 397	YouTube 400	7

* Likes / Followers

This is one of my favorite series of posts. I asked each photographer to share their favorite photos taken by them as well as one by another photographer. I loved their responses.



"The power of movies ... This is ten year old Deirdre of Charlottesville (it's her birthday), an aspiring film director her Dad told me, at today's showing of "My Father's Dragon" featured as part of the @vafilmfest It was so much fun to witness her amazement. @meglefauve the co-writer, was wonderful in an earlier panel discussion and inspiring to me as well!"
- Justin Ide

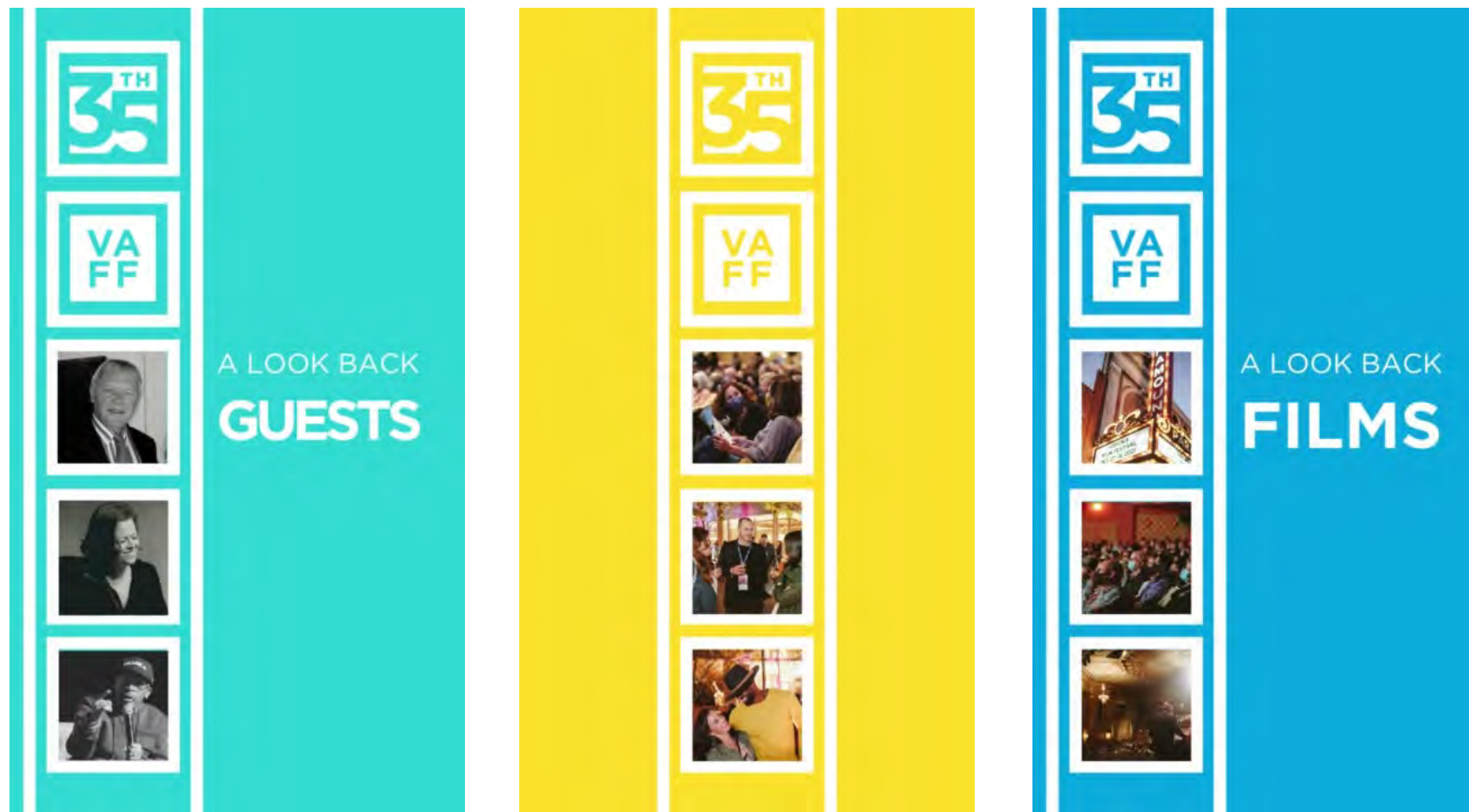


"This is one of my favorite shots of the festival. It's pretty much self-explanatory, but most of all it made me proud to see two black men that are obviously excellent and at the top of their game, standing up on that stage, celebrating each other's success. That was the peak for me."
- Eze Amos



"The human interaction between the director and fiddler was the most feel good moment of the Festival for me."
- Coe Sweet

Compiled 35 years of archives into highlights of posters, films, guests, and community to create reels, stories, photo albums, and posts across all social platforms. Also created some swag with the posters artwork!



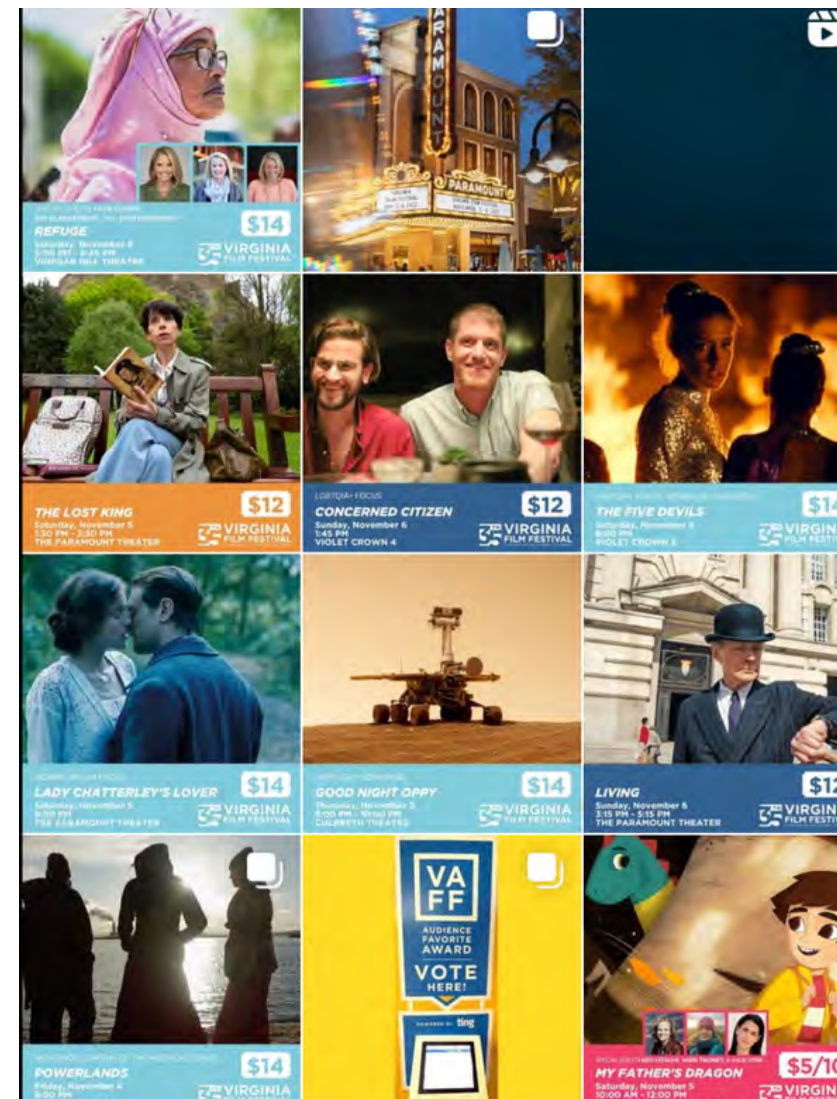
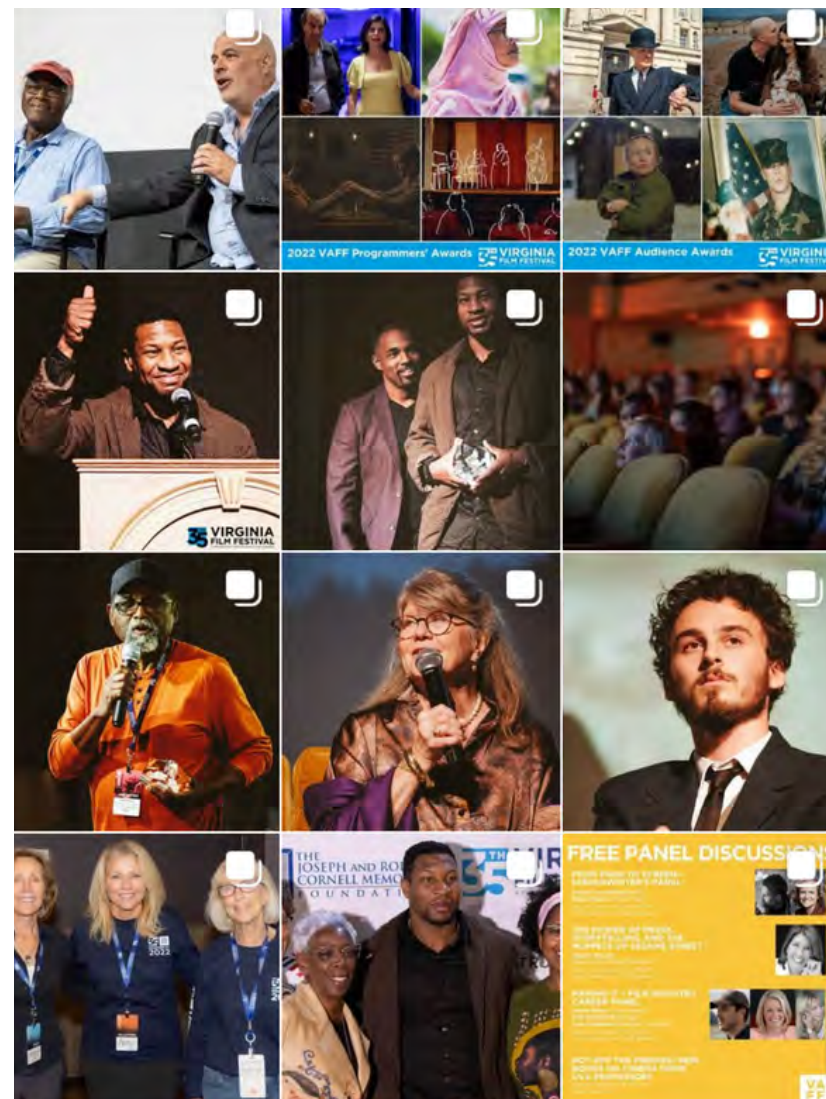
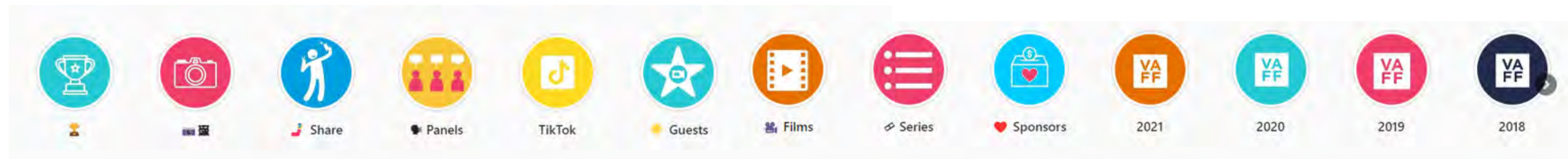
I took the color scheme used in the At-A-Glance as inspiration to create icons for the different themes. I used those new graphics and the existing color scheme (teal, navy, orange, pink, yellow) in social media posts across platforms.



2022 SCHEDULE



Created new highlight reel icons and story content



Designed new template for sponsor posts



Last 90 Days ▾

Aug 15 - Nov 12

Overview

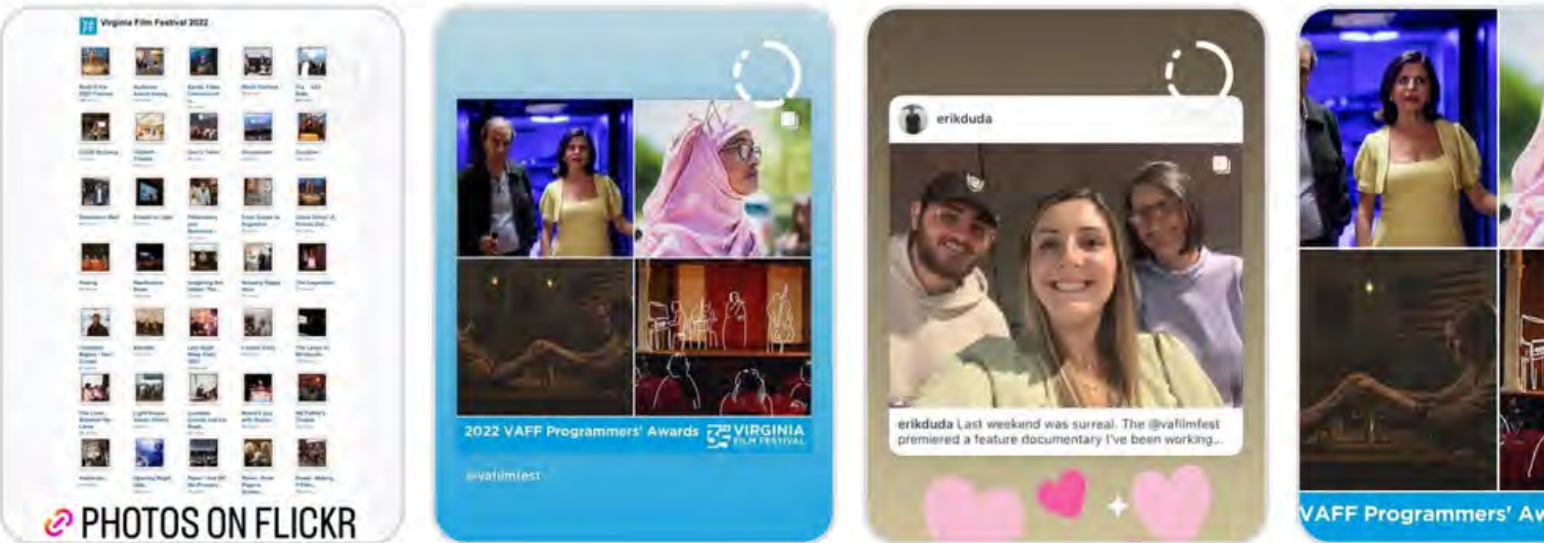
You reached **+1,572%** more accounts compared to May 17 - Aug 14

Accounts reached	31.8K	>
	+1,572%	
Accounts engaged	2,279	>
	+1,056%	
Total followers	3,681	>
	+16%	

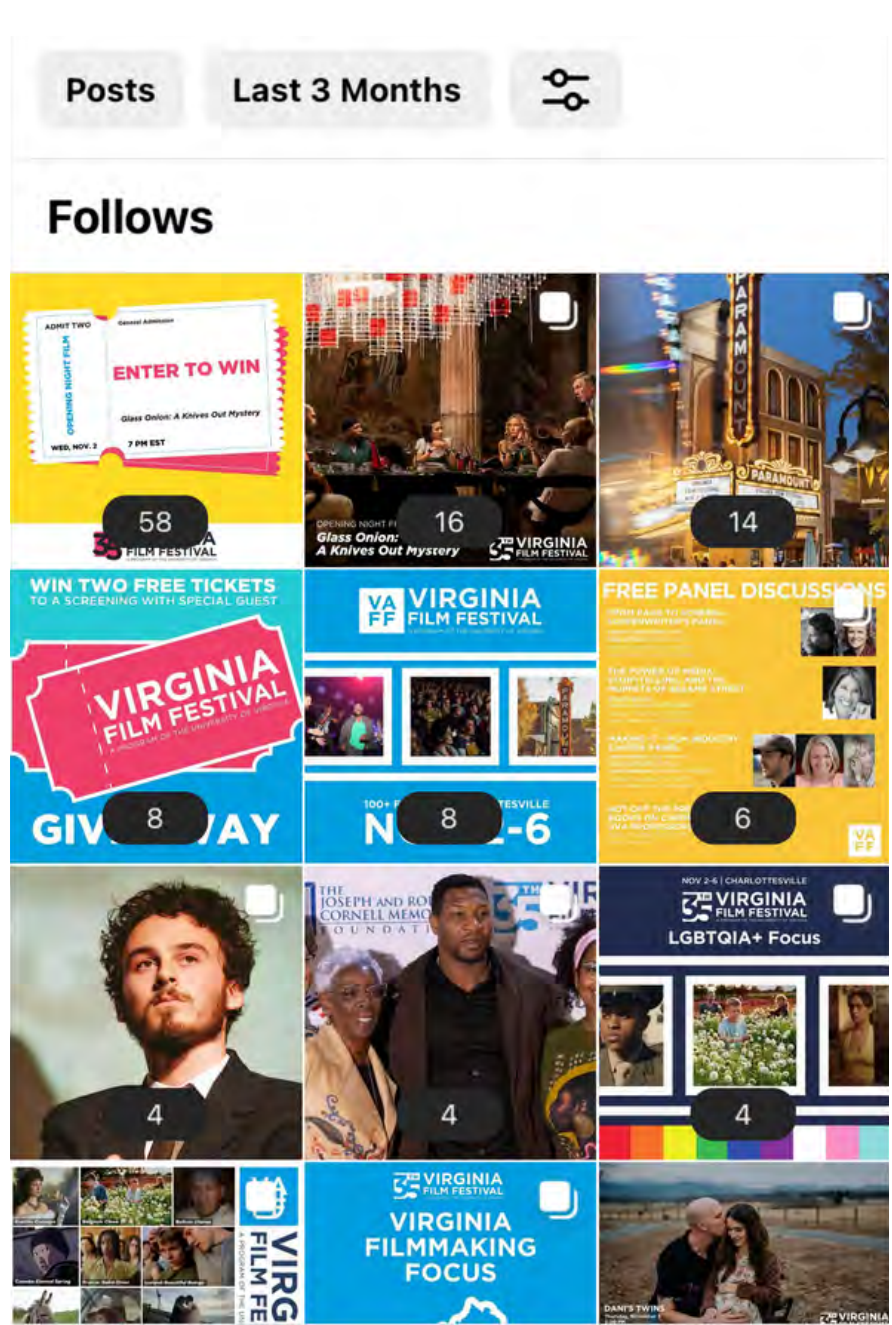
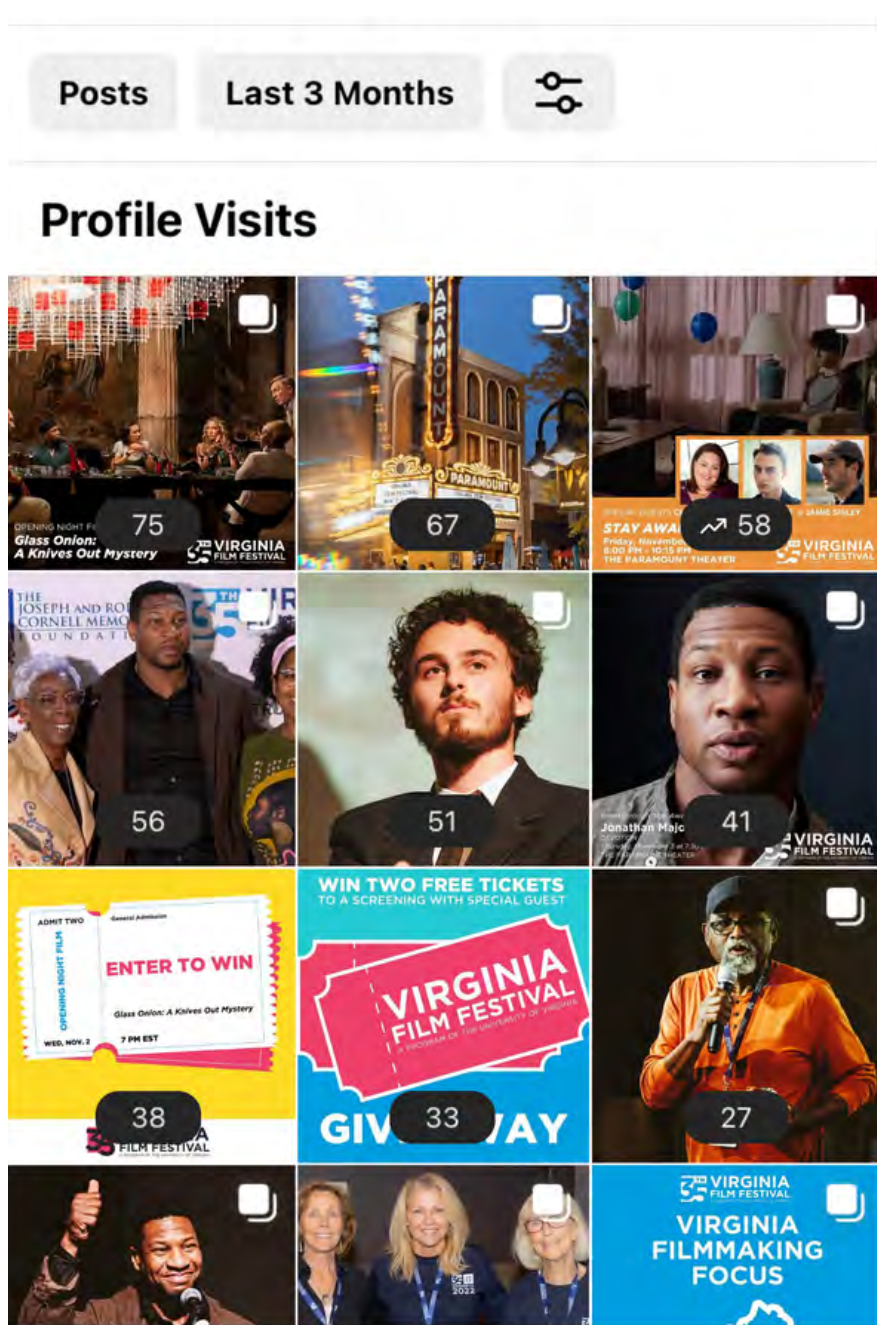
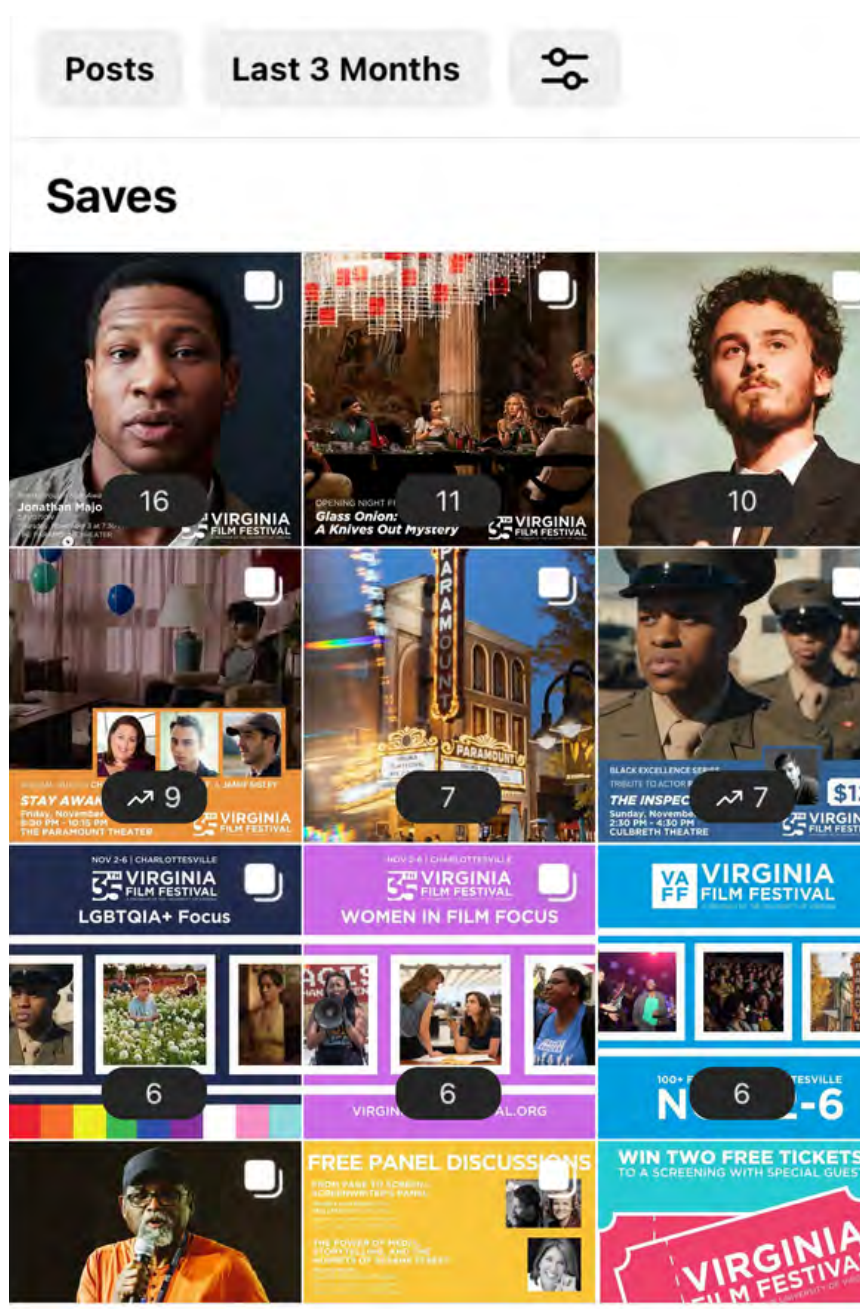
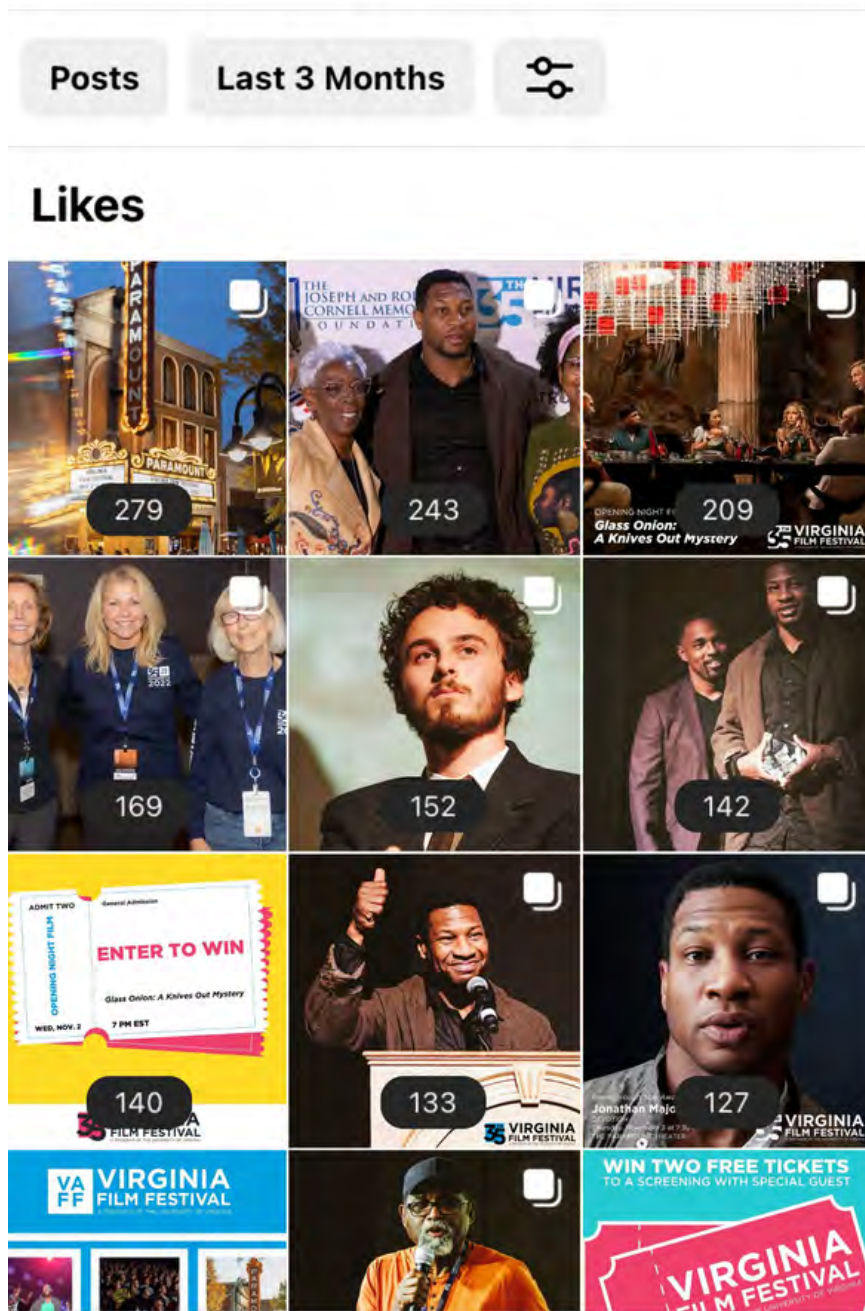


Content You Shared

See all




Posts	54	>
Stories	319	>
Reels	11	>






AllLast 3 Months🔍


Accounts reached




93.9K




70K




40.5K




18.4K




17.8K




7,431




3,660



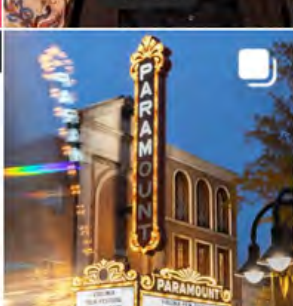
1,753




1,728




1,630




1,628



1,550



1,394




1,364




1,339




1,311



1,286



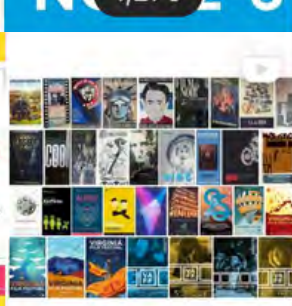
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1,177




983




958




943




832



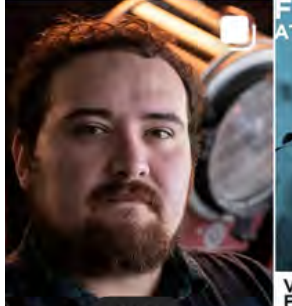
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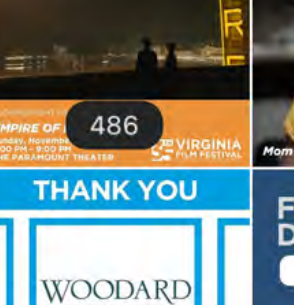
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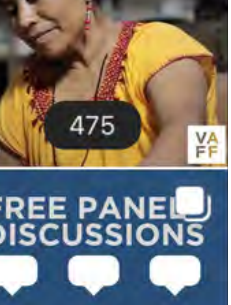
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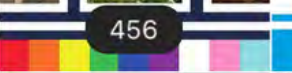
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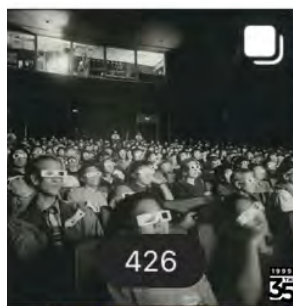
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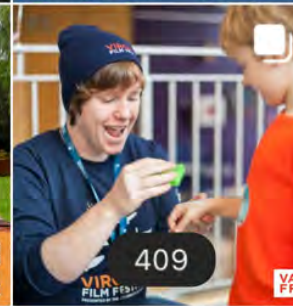
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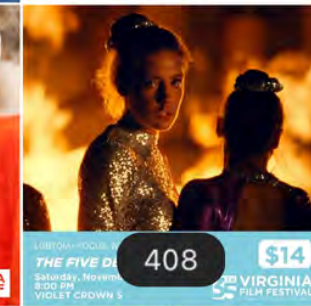
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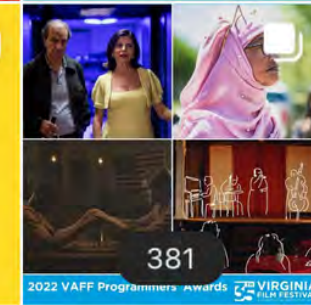
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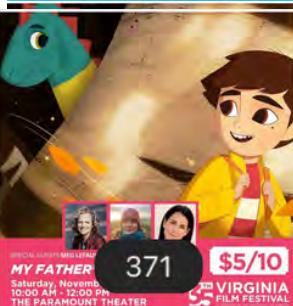
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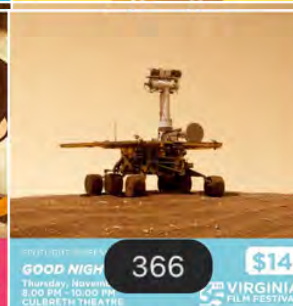
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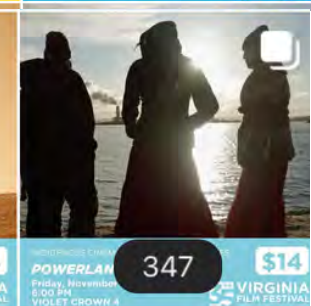
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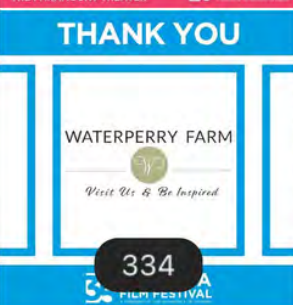
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334



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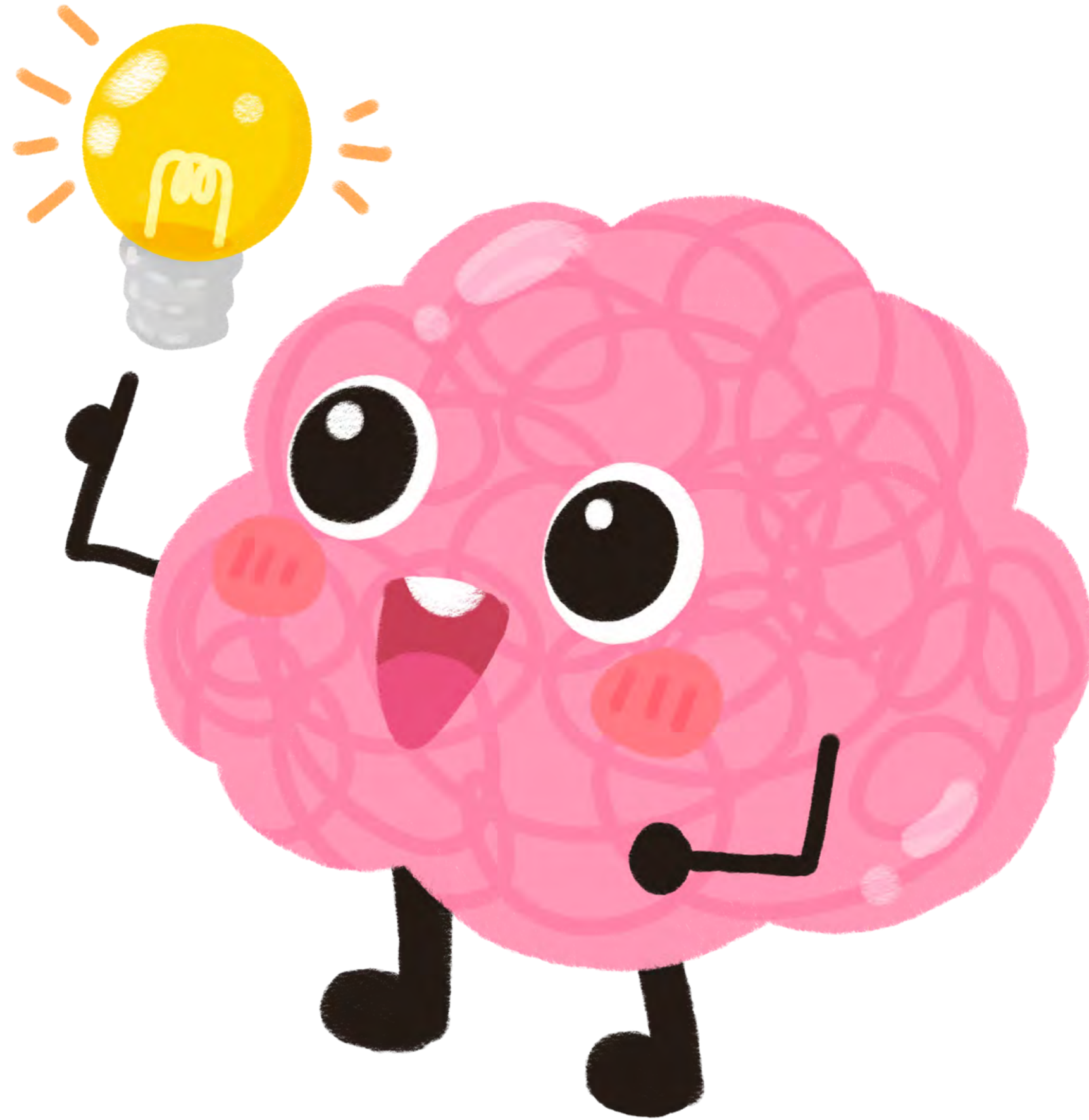
VA
FF

VIRGINIA FILM FESTIVAL

A PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



LEAH'S SUGGESTIONS & QUIRKY IDEAS



COFFEE & DONUTS

The Duck Donuts at the panels were a sweet surprise (pun intended!). **Build on that!**

Offer more opportunities to socialize without alcohol.

Have morning coffee discussions before films.



**My twin suggested a lot of these too in her survey!*

Q&A

I sent a survey to Ambassadors asking for questions of guests and I found there were a lot of thoughtful responses. I'm all for spontaneity too, but I think when time is limited you can get the best experience for both guest and audience with a little more advanced planning. When my husband did a podcast he got all the questions in advance. It didn't seem staged to me when I listened to it, but he told me it he appreciated having time to prepare some answers.

I think it would be useful to have cards in the lobby for people to write questions before the event. When you only have 3-5 questions being allowed you want it to be a good experience for everyone.

It can be intimidating to go in front of a large audience and ask a question and you can fumble over words. There could be an amazing question from someone who is too scared to actually ask it. I know it's also a dream fulfilled to talk to someone you admire by asking a question so I wouldn't want to remove that entirely. But how do we make it as fair as possible? How can we give people a voice and also give them opportunities to have special moments with people they are inspired by.

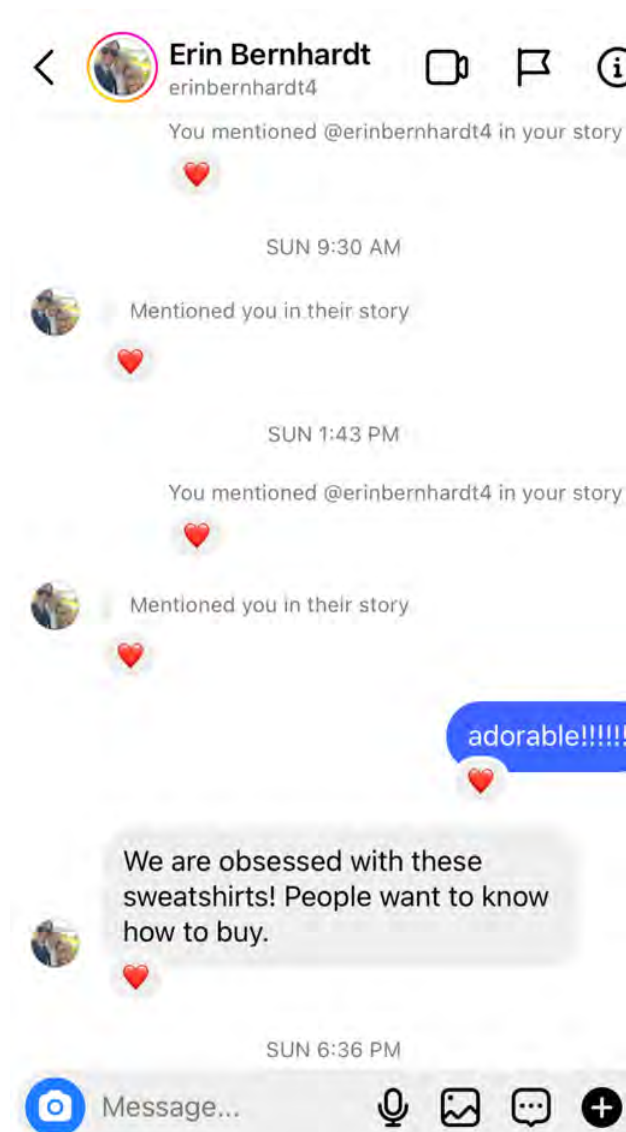
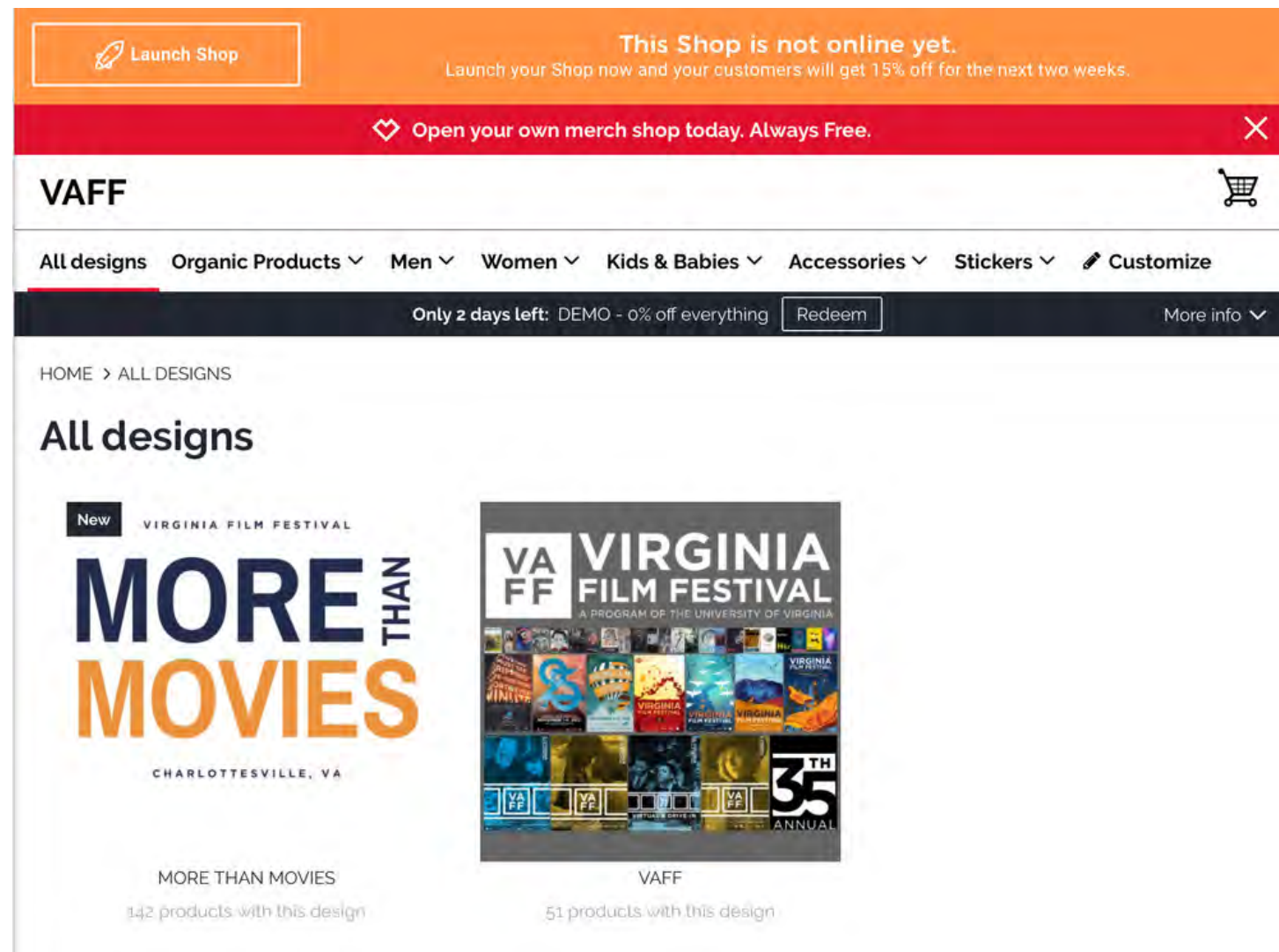
I think it would be fun to have social posts asking what people want to know from panelists and guests in advance as well.

There was a touching moment at "Women Talking" when the only woman to ask a question got flustered because the guy before her basically had the exact same question she was planning to ask. She handled it really well and I spoke with her afterwards to encourage and thank her for speaking up. She said that she thought it was important for a woman to ask a question at a movie about women and she was 100% spot on. I wish she could have joined in the conversation I had with Judith Ivey at the Wrap Party!

MERCHANDISE ON DEMAND

I have spreadshirt.com shops for my race, but there are other vendors out there (bonfire, threadless, etc.).

I really think you should have a place for patrons to purchase swag. It's so easy to set up and you can set the price point and get paid by check or electronically when things are sold. You don't have to worry about inventory and people can get items they want! This is how I ordered almost all of the merch (as my daughter would call it!) that seemed to show up every day in the office (tank, tee, bag) except for the mousepads (which I got on shutterfly.com).



NAME TAGS

For people who have a hard time seeing, make the first name BIGGER. If you want to talk to someone that's the most important thing to see. There's value in their affiliation of course too, but I want to know someone's name without having to adjust my glasses. :) Also, I felt awkward asking for the plastic parts back at the first event. Either find a way to not have to do that (some people definitely wanted to keep a memento) or have a nice big sign!



Please **RETURN**
your **plastic badge**
for **RECYCLING**
as you leave!

You can keep your paper name tag
for the memory book.

THANK YOU!

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

TITLE/COMPANY



FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

TITLE/COMPANY



FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

TITLE/COMPANY



MASCOT

Create a mascot! This would be especially fun to tie in family-friendly events, but all ages can have fun with a mascot. I'm thinking a squirrel because the squirrels of UVA Instagram page is so popular, squirrels are everywhere on the downtown mall and grounds, and they have a sense of fall about them too – a name could play on the film theme i.e.,

SquiREEL or **TALE the VAFF Squirrel**

*The Portland Film Festival has Willie the Blue Heron



I'm not saying I bought a squirrel costume when this idea first occurred to me, but ok I did!

QUIZ NIGHT

Have a movie themed trivia night during the festival (Firefly hosts a Geeks Who Drink branded trivia night on Tuesday, the Wool Factory also has one). We could create our own trivia game or you can hire GWD to create a unique trivia game for your event as a fundraiser, etc.

<https://www.geekswhodrink.com/private-events/>

WALK/RUN FUNDRAISER

Consider have film-themed fun run/walk or 5k fundraiser.
Tie it in to running related documentaries or movies.
Ragged Mountain has hosted running legends during the
Book Festival, maybe we could do the same for VAFF.

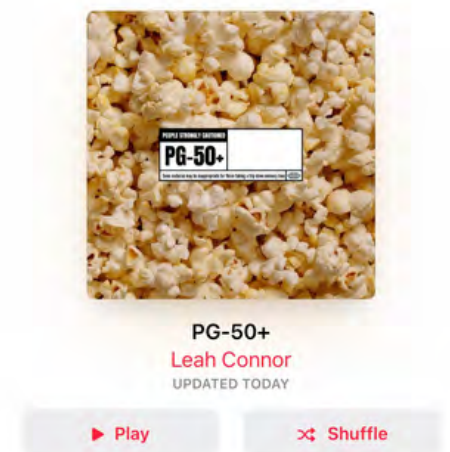
<https://www.facebook.com/events/the-watersound-origins-community-watersound-town-center/run-watersound-5k-film-festival/200572755364639>

MUSIC

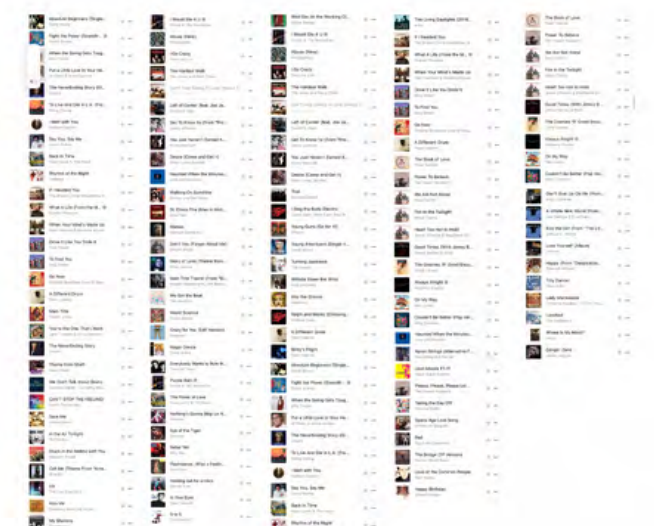
I love music and music in movies and have lots of playlists. Consider using more songs featured in film during events. Suggest film-related songs to DJ for events (not sure if you'd done this already). I've got a pretty extensive list of amazing music from movie soundtracks from 1980-2020s on apple music and am creating a list on spotify too. Another thought is co-sponsoring some event with another nonprofit at IX park that combines movie music and another theme for a fundraiser

<https://www.agoodgroup.com/blog/pg-50>

<https://music.apple.com/us/playlist/pg-50/pl.u-ZmblAj1T07zva9>



People 50+ Strongly Cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for those taking a trip down memory lane.



YEAR-ROUND CONTENT - EVENTS

Create an event package of sorts (I'm blanking on the right terminology for what I'm thinking) for local nonprofits where you suggest a relevant film and create a Q&A, panel, etc. around the topic that's relevant to that organization. I'm thinking of using the Three Minutes as an example of that but it doesn't have to be just new releases. I'm still thinking this one through, but I do think it's a way for growth and impact on the community. I think about to what Jody was saying (or was it Ilya) about how a film can make a difficult topic more accessible to people and allow for otherwise very difficult conversations, but it can also be a way to connect that's not so heavy or dark. There could be comedies that also can allow for discussions that resonate and help people grow.

YEAR-ROUND CONTENT - VIRTUAL

Use virtual or hybrid events during the off-season (and consider ways to increase accessibility to live in-person events). Your interviews and discussions with Annette Benning and some other star power are top viewed videos on YouTube. When you've got talent that can't make it here in person, don't dismiss the thought of creating a virtual or hybrid event. With proper promotion it could be a great way to get eyes on your brand from all over the country.

YEAR-ROUND CONTENT - SOCIAL

- Use social media to celebrate movie related milestones, actor birthdays, film awards, social holidays, etc.
- Trivia
- Contests
- #Throwback photos
- Interviews with past interns and ambassadors
- Ask staff the last 3 movies they watched and what they thought of them (I stole this idea from the Violet Crown job application form!)

I have an IDEA board on the shared drive for inspiration on creating new and different types of content.

BLOG

Expand BLOG - with regularly themed content, recommendations from staff, issues driven posts, interviews, in the news, etc. this is great for SEO and also getting the brand higher ranking in searches and people's minds.

EMAIL

Create a multitude of email headers with the Watermark template – switching out photos ... We have so many amazing photos, why not switch out the photo for every issue? Also it will help easily identify the different issues as you're scrolling through your inbox or the web archives (which I'm working on creating)

PODCAST

Adding a podcast could be another way to create content outside of the Festival.



RECORDINGS / YOUTUBE

Record all the panels and put them on YouTube. Same thing with all the Q&As

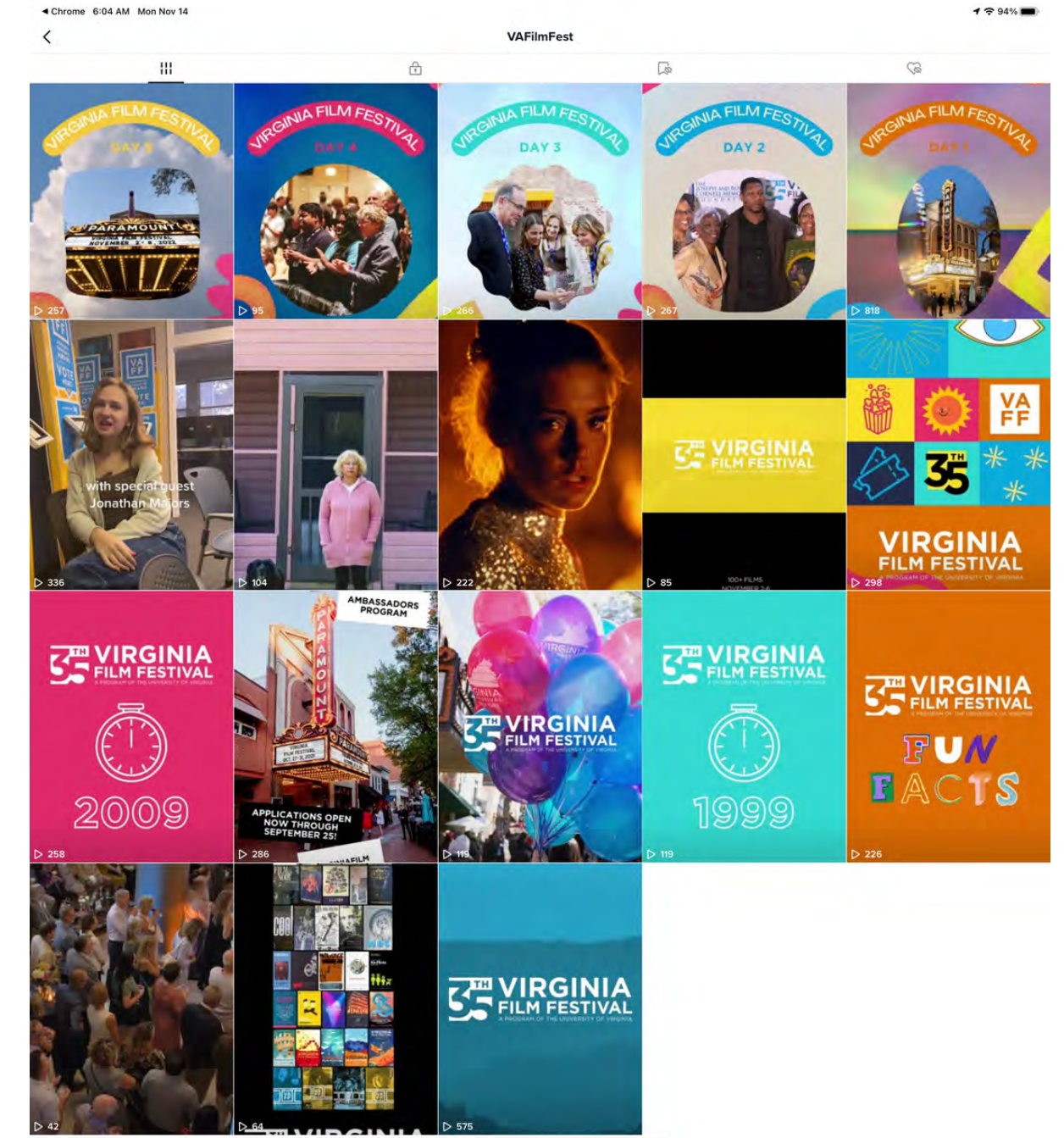
Work on creating original content for YouTube

SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE FESTIVAL

I had so many more ideas to build engagement and content for social media, but of course there's not enough time and also we need to understand it'll take time to slowly re-engage the very large audiences we have on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Focusing on LinkedIn was important for me because building connections within the professional world between colleagues, interns, filmmakers, scholars, etc. is an area for growth on that platform. I saw there was a LinkedIn group but I didn't have access to it . That group actually had a bigger audience than our actual page, so I think we need to figure out a way to get those people to interact with the page.

SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE FESTIVAL

I wanted to do more videos and that's something that I'd like to build on if I'm able to return next year. I know that video content is key for increasing engagement and building audiences. That's why I thought it was important to start a TikTok account. Lydia (and Omega) did an amazing job creating content for TikTok because it's a world I know nothing about and would like to not know (still puzzled how the heck did that first post I made when we had no followers got 575 views?!?!).





My sister was my super fan during my work at the Festival. She was so proud of me and told everyone she knew about the Festival. A few times I had to tell her to tone it down with all the likes and retweets, but she genuinely wanted to share as much as she could about the Festival with her followers. She really enjoyed the panels and cried during the films we got to watch together. She appreciated the captions for “Living” as we both have some hearing loss.



I had a conversation with UVA President Jim Ryan at the Arts Picnic. It felt like a sign that I ran into him and his wife Katie. I was surprised we talked as long as we did. It really meant a lot to me. I know them both from the running world long before he was UVA President. And then he ran my race in 2021 and thanked me as he's running 6 minute miles and I'm barely surviving. Ha! When he made contact with me to get my attention to say 'hi' after his introduction on Opening Night I admit I was a little giddy. I think maybe he remembered that conversation we had about my excitement working for the Festival and now here we both were on a successful Opening Night. It was a perfect moment for me.



Not everyone here knows that I have an MFA in creative writing from GMU from eons ago. I haven't written much since moving to Charlottesville, but one of the highlights was having a table reading of my play at Live Arts. Meg LeFauve put the fire in me to start sharing my stories again. I'm so grateful for that. She seemed touched that I shared with her the film she wrote, "Inside Out" was required viewing and discussed by my twin sister at an the eating disorder residential program. I joined Meg's screenwriting group on Facebook and when she liked the selfie of me and my daughter before "The Lost King" I also felt giddy!



This photo by Eze made me laugh at a moment when I really need it. The Wrap Party was a lot of fun because I got to give my Ted Talk on interviews and rejection to some of the interns and I spent a lot of time with a running friend, Mary Alice, who used to work at The Daily Progress and now just loves attending the Festival. We had a meaningful conversation with Judith Ivey about "Women Talking" and fun dancing. It was one of the best nights of 2022 for me!



Sometimes you have to ask for what you want and you get it. This ID means so much to me and not because it got me the most likes on my IG (yeah, i'm really unpopular, 33 is a high point for me. ha!). It's something tangible to show that, yes, I really worked here. It might seem silly, but it was very meaningful to me.

1. Whatever the work is, do it well—not for the boss but for yourself.
2. You make the job; it doesn't make you.
3. Your real life is with us, your family.
4. You are not the work you do; you are the person you are.

Toni Morrison
from "The Work You Do, the Person You Are"

Never put the key to
your happiness in
someone else's pocket.



"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."

- Fred Rogers

11/8/2022

That comment occurred to me this weekend as I was both an employee and attendee of the Virginia Film Festival. An event that, in many ways, was 13 years in the making. In 2009, when I first attended VAFF, ecstatic to meet Alan Ball, asking him sign my "Six Feet Under" book and telling him the show saved my marriage because it gave us something to share together, I could have never imagined I'd end up being a seasonal employee and have the opportunity to meet another screenwriter, Meg LeFauve, who would inspire and encourage me to tell my stories.

This weekend I also recalled the advice from a coach who had said to runners training for a long distance race that the marathon should be a celebration for all the miles it took to get to the starting line. For so many runners it's the hours on the roads, in solitude or with friends, that brings meaning to the sport, not the actual race. But when you earn the PR you've been striving for or finally get to the finish line in a race you've been struggling through, the completion of that goal is a feeling of joy and accomplishment that is like no other.

I cackled. I cried. I danced. I panicked. I felt awkward. I felt pride. I was alone. I was with friends, new and old. And, most importantly, I shared experiences with my daughter and with my twin.

0 Comments



My favorite photo! Photo by Justin Ide



My daughter and me before a screening of "The Lost King"

10/16/2022

0 Comments

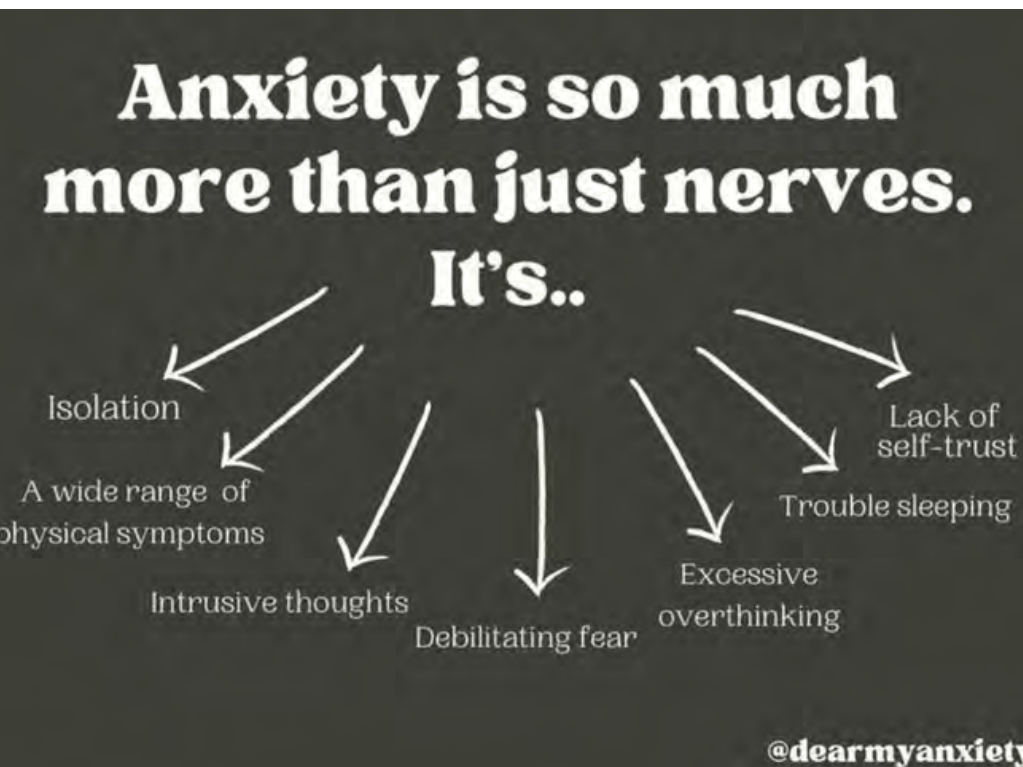
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I love documentaries, movies that make me laugh, and films that make me cry.

The last 4 movies I've watched as of October 15, 2022 are:

- Sidney
- 'Twas the Fight Before Christmas
- Bad Moms
- Devotion



DREAM

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME HAVE MY DREAM JOB!

If you know me, you know I'm obsessed with WORDLE.
I actually got DREAM in one try on Saturday, November 5, and when I saw Jody in the office before the Wrap party I told him why I chose that word that day and how I thought it was a sign. I'm so grateful for this experience and for everyone I've met.
THANK YOU!



*"I know I belong somewhere—
I'm just not sure where that is."*

If I don't share my Wordle score
Please send a wellness check to my door
I may be dead or captive

If Garmin shows me inactive
If I suddenly feel attractive
These are signs not to ignore
Please send a welfare check to my door

If I look rich instead of broke
If I crave a bear that I can't poke
If I never laugh at a joke
Please check in on me

If I stop being the squeaky wheel
If I quit obsessing about how I feel
If I don't debate what's real
If you think it's worth the trek
Please check in on me

If my tweets seem jejune
If I text "no worries" or "soon"
If I take control without saying sorry
If I make it bold without being chary
If I rant without expletives
Regularly speak with relatives
If I fail a test for stress
I may be under duress

If I pretend I don't care
Write a blog but don't overshare
If I don't keep a promise
If I'm not brutally honest
If I can't imagine the absolute worst
If I grab a Pepsi to quench my thirst
It's not me

If I love the crimes when there's a breeze
If I see the forest instead of trees
It's not me

If I don't lose something I value every day
Won't say I'm atheist before I pray

If I don't celebrate Christmas before Halloween
Can't see both sides or gray between

If I won't offer to take the blame
Live off guilt, embrace the shame

If I miss a chance to self-deprecate
And start showing up an hour late

Avoiding tips and joyful frowns/routes
Freudian slips and loyal doubts
Feeling drunk without a sip
Rent a truck to scout a trip

If I ask for sex, but decline a hug
Expect a charge without a plug

If I give up when there's so much more to do
If I don't share my Wordle score with you
Please check in on me

When I decide to let it go
Accept the truth I'll never know

**Feels like sober amnesty
Another closure fantasy**

agoodgroup.com/wordle.html

ALWAYS

BE HONEST

BE KIND

BE FRIENDLY



JUST HOW YOU WANT TO BE TREATED

NOTE to SELF:

When you FIND yourself
in the SPACE BETWEEN
NO LONGER and NOT YET,
RESIST the URGE to GET OUT
AS QUICKLY as POSSIBLE.
MAKE yourself AT HOME in THERE.
IF YOU'RE GONNA SIT in DISCOMFORT,
GET YOURSELF SOME FUN THROW PILLOWS.
BE CURIOUS. Stay OPEN.
MAKE ROOM for GRIEF and GRACE.
LET the NEXT THING FIND YOU,
INSTEAD of the OTHER WAY AROUND.
REMEMBER that you ARE NOT WAITING
for the NEXT PART of YOUR LIFE to BEGIN.
YOU ARE LIVING THIS PART.

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