

# Movies

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## Local Action

RHONDA STEWART

### A filmmaker unafraid to go against the tide

It's a great time to be a filmmaker whose specialty is socially conscious documentaries, as **Robbie Leppzer** knows. Although debates on the war in Iraq and concerns about civil liberties have become commonplace, Leppzer isn't jumping on any bandwagon. He's been making activist documentaries for more than 25 years, including works on nuclear disarmament and indigenous people of the Americas.

Leppzer's work caught the attention of Plymouth Independent Film Festival organizer **Lisa Mattei**, who tapped him to be the event's first featured filmmaker. The festival wraps up today and Leppzer's recent "The Peace Patriots" was included in the retrospective. It profiles a large, grass-roots movement of Western Massachusetts residents that includes war veterans, clergy, and students ranging in age from 13 to 74 who oppose the conflict in Iraq.

"The film is very much about dissent in a time of war and how it's important to recognize that dissent is patriotic," Leppzer, a Winchester native, says in a phone interview. "The whole notion of patriotism means standing up for what you believe in for your country, and in this case it's people saying war is wrong."



Robbie Leppzer's "The Peace Patriots," about a cross section of Western Massachusetts residents protesting the Iraq war, screened recently at the Plymouth Independent Film Festival.

Leppzer produces his films through his company Turning Tide Productions ([www.turning-tide.com](http://www.turning-tide.com)) in Wendell. He's been invited to screen "The Peace Patriots" at the Northern Lights Documentary Film Festival in

Newburyport, which runs Sept. 30-Oct. 2.

"Independently produced documentary films are a very powerful source of presenting alternative perspectives, presenting voices that are usually ignored or

given superficial coverage by mainstream media," Leppzer says. "My greatest hope when I make a film is that it'll be a catalyst for discussion and debate and widening the terms of that debate."