

Father/daughter team hopes film will help save the Norconian

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By **LAURA RICO**
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NORCO - Fathers and daughters don't always see eye to eye, but Kevin and Angelique Bash strongly agree on one thing: preserving their hometown's cultural legacy.

The embodiment of that legacy is arguably the Norconian hotel, a once grand resort and spa that sits decaying behind prison gates.

The structure, inaugurated in 1929, contains elements of art deco, mission and Mediterranean architecture but is closed to the public and only accessible with permission from the Department of Corrections, on whose land it sits.

Inspired by her father's efforts to save the Norconian, Angelique shot and edited a documentary film detailing the Norconian's evolution from a resort to a naval hospital to a prison and finally vacated state property.

But Angelique has never been inside the Norconian.

The building's location behind prison gates makes it inaccessible to anyone younger than 18. Angelique, 16, had to hand the camera over to her father to shoot the interior shots.

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Mark Zaleski / The Press-Enterprise

Angelique Bash, 16, and her father, Kevin Bash, have finished a documentary film about the Norconian, which was once a grand hotel that catered to Hollywood's elite.

However, that hasn't lessened her determination to raise awareness about the building.

"We can't afford to lose it," she said. "It has such a story to tell. ... We want our children and grandchildren to be able to see it firsthand, rather than in a movie or a book."

Angelique caught her first glimpse of the Norconian's walls while playing softball as a child at nearby Makin Park.

If money was no object -- the cost to repair the decaying building is in the \$160 million range -- Angelique would want it restored to its original state.

"I would love it to be a hotel again," she said. "But there are so many things that would get in the way of that."

Over a six-month period that started last summer, Angelique interviewed hotel guests, historians, a Navy corpsman and Ellen Clark Revelle, the daughter of Rex Clark, the real estate entrepreneur who began building the Norconian in 1926.

Angelique took her camera to Revelle's La Jolla home and was greeted by a 97-year-old who was reticent about discussing her ties to the Norconian and Clark, from whom she was estranged for most of her life.

"At first she wasn't really that talkative," Angelique said. "She was a bit subdued."

The conversation thawed when the subject turned to tennis, a sport enjoyed by both Angelique and Revelle.

"She definitely warmed up to me after that. ... She was so great," Angelique said.

With help from her father, Angelique obtained photos from the Norco Historical Society, USC and the Scripps Family Archives.

Her father also taught her to use a camera and edit her footage on a Pro Tools workstation.

"I eventually picked it up, but it wasn't specifically designed for beginners," she said.

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Angelique and Kevin Bash

The father and daughter from Norco are working to save a building on the National Register of Historic Places

What: Documentary film about the Norconian entered into a state history day competition

Where: Screened tonight at the Norco City Council meeting, 7, 2820 Clark Ave.