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War film fights for cash

Local documentarian Keith Famie holds fundraiser to support 'Our Vietnam Generation'

Keith Famie has learned many things as he's worked on his last two documentaries. One of them is that he just can't do this anymore.

Once a well-known local chef and then an even more well-known contestant on "Survivor: The Australian



NEAL RUBIN

Outback," he's now a filmmaker. His last big project was "Detroit: Our Greatest Generation," which made lots of people cry and which rendered Famie increasingly broke.

One of the revelations from filming, he says, was how often he found Vietnam veterans helping and supporting World War II vets. The more he talked to the younger men and women, the more clear it became that they needed their story told, too.

As has become typical, he dove into "Our Vietnam Generation" with vision, enthusiasm and far too little cash flow. To help with that last part, there's a 6 p.m. fundraiser in Howell on Thursday at Crystal Gardens Banquet Center, 5768 E. Grand River Ave.

Figure on the standard food and silent auction, along with a special 20-minute trailer from the documentary, a color guard and musician Steve Pichan's new video, "Look Away," viewable now at www.detroitnews.com/rubin.

Tickets are \$45. Call (248) 869-0096 or click to www.ourvietnamgeneration.com, and come prepared to hear the sorts of harrowing stories that will either take you back or make you glad you weren't there.

After one horrific firefight,



Alicia Famie

Master Sgt. Jeff Rector, featured in the film, helps notify next of kin of those lost in Iraq or Afghanistan.

John Colone of Hell woke up in a body bag with a tag on his toe. Master Sgt. Jeff Rector of Flint met his wife in Vietnam and today helps notify the next of kin of those lost in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The accounts are mesmerizing, Famie says, but his accountant is aghast. "We are still sucking fumes daily," he concedes. Beyond that, there's the all-encompassing nature of the work.

"After this year," he says, "I am done with these types of human interest films. It's just too hard on the people in my life."

Whether he can hold to that, of course, is a story yet to be told.