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With the exception of Jayne Eastwood's character, all the roles are caricatured in order to more fully make the points. Although all the pieces are excellent, I took particular, masochistic delight in one about a sophisticated director who has a penchant for strong, assertive women and who is going to help her make it. As someone I know flashed into my mind, I squirmed in my seat and thought "how true." Other women, I am sure, experienced the same thing with other characters.

The Doll Factory has an extremely large cast. Since everyone did so well, it is hard to single out any one person's performance. People that struck particular chords with me were the director, the female hostage, the hooker, and the guru.

A fraction of the camera work is a little awkward, but nothing unnerving. One or two of the shots are either overlit or were badly developed in the lab. In a couple of spots, the music is, at first, somewhat overbearing. On the whole, the production values are good and do not interfere with the unfolding of the story.

Ms. Boyden and Ms. Cohen present it in an original and skillful manner. They avoid the hysteria which can, and often does, accompany feminist works. The film's intent is quite obvious, but its handling is restrained.

The film takes the form of several vignettes with each giving life to Murphy's Law - whatever can go wrong, will go wrong. Most of the obstacles confronting our heroine are members of men's doing.

In spite of its tremendous humor, The Doll Factory is quite sad. Our heroine does not make it. Granted that it is difficult for anyone to succeed in life, it is still more difficult for women to make it in a man's world. Contrary to the cigarette ads, we have a long way to go before we can make the grade as easily as men can.

Where Shipwrecks Abound is an hour-long documentary-type television film. Stress 'type' here because it is at once documentation and entertainment, containing a major component of dramatic reconstruction, already evident in an earlier multi-award winning short, short, Wreck. Stoneman pushes the technique much further in the new film, mixing underwater, surface, land, and studio sequences to good effect. The whole is in turn informative, amusing, dramatic, well-paced, and evocative of past and present inland maritime environments.

Seventy to eighty per cent of the film is shot on, about, and under Lake Michigan's Great Lakes, products of late 1800's, early 1900's storms. Still, the subject fairly gurgles promise, like the head on a glass of good stout. Why then, I wondered, during a recent screening of Mako Film's Where Shipwrecks Abound, have we seen so little on the topic? Books yes, there are numerous editions available, but films to date have been sporadic, brief, and scratchy for the most part.

Access is success. A film, any film on the topic, is blatantly thin without good wreck footage, and in the case of Great Lakes wrecks there are no conveniently sited museum pieces, no offshore sentinels. Getting it into the can means going 'down there' where they lie, up to 100 metres underwater. The truthful answer to my self-imposed question is: there are few competent underwater filmmakers on the continent, fewer yet in Canada. This film clearly shows that John Stoneman is one of those few.

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Huron and Georgian Bay, probing many 19th-Century wrecks interned there. But it is also more than a film about shipwrecks. Stoneman documents the contemporary aquatic action and projects the sense of underwater adventure which make these waters a central Canadian boating and diving Mecca. Land sequences at the jump-off point of Tobermory clip along merrily to the music of Walter Carlos (Clockwork Orange), while the sepulchral voice of Chris Wiggins (CTV’s Swiss Family Robinson) presages the dramatic re-creation of past events and underwater sequences.

Where Shipwrecks Abound is a something-for-everybody film — necessary, obviously, as TV fare. Nowhere is there a hint of the shallowness, however, that can haunt be-all productions. Stoneman is sincere and empathetic with his subject in all its dimensions. (The proverbially mandatory three to five second slung-bikini shot is a personal objection only.)

Problems associated with this motion picture, if they can properly be described as problems in the usual sense at all, are those inherent in any underwater production. There is a spiritually exhilarating but physically limiting and ungrateful world down under. Tenacity and stamina are the chief demands on director and crew. Added to the usual problems with which every director must cope, they make the normal difficulties with the creative component of a film pall in comparison. High summer can find a swimmer refreshed by 18°C surface water, but down below ten plus metres — and down the filmmaker eventually needs to go, if he wants the best there is — the water is a mind-numbing 2°C or 3°C at best. Most critically, vision is peripherally limited by suspended particles in the water, despite intense lighting. Establishing shots are out of the question, and a measure of the film becomes the way in which the director works within and manipulates the fabric of the physical environment.

Stoneman provides his audience with a verbal and topside frame of reference for each wreck, then clarifies and sets it by using great sound and archival still clips of the ships as they once flew before wind and storm. Underwater, the camera moves in brief, wholly acceptable, crab-like dollys, as a man might work his way forward hand-over-hand on board a ship battling incoming seas. For a change of pace, he has the camera aggressively probe, or alternately float mystically over the memory bones of this long past era. Still again, he indulges the audience in the wonder of underwater life for its own sake, pulling off a number of sequences to satisfy the appetite of even a veteran diver, and does it as a compliment rather than an intrusion to the greater subject matter.

It is a film of many elements this Shipwrecks: contemporary, historic/re-created drama and storyteller/candid look at convention politics, and a woman’s struggle to become leader of the Conservative Party, further expands our awareness of the Canadian political process.

The title of the film is deceiving. It is, in part, about Flora MacDonald’s attempt to become the first woman leader of the Conservative Party, but it is also a behind-the-scenes investigation of convention politics, from its idealism to its wheeling and dealing. Actually, the film might have been more aptly called “A portrait of ‘Fast’ Eddie Goodman,” Eddie is the party’s chief fund raiser and a Flora supporter. He is seen addressing a group of campaign workers, and he reassures them that they are running an honest and frugal campaign by stating that “we’re not here to buy it.” Juxtaposed to this is a scene where Eddie is meeting with the campaign staff, and he reassures them...