

# some 16 mm filmmakers from toronto

special section



Atop the CN Tower as seen by Westminster Films Ltd

Despite all the sound and fury revolving around Canada's attempt to break into the international feature film market, the backbone of the industry remains the 16mm producer and filmmaker.

He is the fellow who makes the commercial, turns out the sponsored films our children see in school (when, that is, they see Canadian films). Increasingly, he is making films for television. He is the fellow who does the daily job, who employs and trains the technicians who later go on to longer and more prestigious films. He is also the fellow who competes with the National Film Board of Canada and with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for his piece of the pie.

The following group of articles presents the Canadian Film and Television Association, the group to which many 16mm producers belong, and introduces some of the filmmakers working in Toronto.

## 30 and going strong

Thirty years is a long time for a producers' association to hold together. Even more unusual is to see a mature association take on new strength and tackle old problems in fresh ways. The Canadian Film and Television Association is just such an association, as Patricia Thompson tells us below.

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by Patricia Thompson

Thirty years ago — way back in 1948 — the AMPLC (Association of Motion Picture Producers and Laboratories of Canada) came into being, and then, in 1974, changed its name to the Canadian Film and Television Association. Forging ahead this year, a March meeting approved a re-organization.

The CFTA is “dedicated to promoting the common interests of those engaged in the motion picture and videotape production and laboratory industries in Canada by maintaining the highest possible standards in producing for industrial, theatrical or television release.” It also represents the industry in its relations with government, other associations, and the public at large.

To accomplish its aims and cover such a wide spectrum, the CFTA has ten far-reaching Divisions. Production (Tape and Film) has six areas — Sponsored Production, Theatrical Production, Commercials (TV and Theatrical), TV Programming and Educational, Animation, and Audio-Video. Productions Services covers Laboratories & Optical Houses plus Sound Studios, Post Production (Film & Tape), with Distributors & Suppliers and Supplies & Equipment making up the total. Each Division has a Chairman. Standing Committees are established as needed, i.e. Industrial Relations, Taxation & Duty Laws, Publicity, which can cut across the activities of all or several of the Divisions.

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*Patricia Thompson is the editor of the Canadian Film Digest Year Book, was director of the Canadian Film Awards for two years and loves film.*

CFTA membership is now in two categories. Active Members (including suppliers and laboratories) pay a sliding scale of fees depending upon a company's gross annual sales. The six-step fee scale has a minimum of \$150 per annum, rising to a maximum of \$1,500. Affiliate Members are those largely retired from the industry who maintain their interest in, and support of, the Association for \$35 a year.

John Teeter, the charmingly urbane General Manager of the CFTA, was buttonholed on the eve of leaving town in late July. The 1978 Convention was being held in Edmonton in conjunction with the Commonwealth International Film Festival (the Commonwealth Games being a sidebar event, of course....).

He was asked to reflect upon the CFTA and its influence and scope in the field of 16mm filmmaking and videotape and was, as always, obliging.

“To say our organization is nationalistic is not a fair statement. We agree with many of the views of ACTRA, the CFEG, and so on, and subscribe to the points system for the definition of a Canadian film. However, we cannot rule out the necessity, from time to time, of being able to bring in foreigners for supporting roles, special effects, and other aspects. We believe strongly in the future and capability of the industry.”

Teeter went on to stress that the CFTA is aiming at better service to its members across the country, while admitting that there are certain difficulties relating to Quebec and to the

West. Maintaining and increasing membership in Quebec isn't easy, where it is a recognized necessity for Quebecers to join the provincial industry organizations. However, campaigning engenders reasonable hope that the CFTA membership will stabilize in the province. Arthur Chetwynd recently toured the West from Winnipeg to Victoria, and there is no use denying that it feels cut off, especially as the bulk of industrial activity is in Ontario.

The next step, according to Teeter, is to translate some of the Divisions into regional sub-groupings in order that better, nationwide service to members becomes a reality.

Further CFTA remodelling is evidenced by the expansion of its 1978 Awards. A luncheon function for five years since sponsored films were separated from the Canadian Film Awards, this year's Awards will span a goodly portion of Friday, October 27. The Sheraton Centre Cinema 2 in Toronto is booked for screenings during the afternoon, to be followed by a Dinner and presentation of the Awards at the adjoining Sheraton Centre Hotel. Dave Broadfoot is confirmed as M.C.

So — the CFTA looks OK kid this year. Sure, there's always the ongoing battle with CBC for better air time, better prices, higher allocation of its dollar to the private sector — and the same applying to NFB. But John Teeter is exuding quiet confidence these days, and beaming affably when talking about the CFTA's strenuous attempts to be supportive and visible, not just in Ontario, but right across the country.

# precarious establishment

Jaan Pill talked with some of the older hands in Toronto, and gives us a thumb-nail sketch of some of the companies, the projects and the preoccupations of these 16mm filmmakers.

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by Jaan Pill

*What does it take to survive as an independent producer in Canada's non-theatrical industry?*

*The answer that kept recurring among the independent producers I spoke to – both those featured here and ones left out of this survey because of space limitations – is that for the independent, the film business is first of all a business. And survival in that business simply means success at selling your services, products and ideas. Period.*

*Many of the producers originally had their start with CBC or NFB, where the requirements for survival are usually of a vastly different order. When you're on a government payroll your salary often has no direct relation to productivity as measured by your products. And your production costs often don't have a direct relation to your film's selling price.*

*One issue that came up over and over was the Film Board's pricing policies for its educational films. The Board argues that it has cornered only 10 per cent of the largely American-dominated education and library market – and that it's opening up the market for Canadian producers by selling its products cheaply. But many independents, such as Insight's, Pen Densham, argue that as a private entrepreneur you can develop a production that happens to parallel a Board pro-*

*duction – and then find that the Board sells film at a third of your own selling price. "The American competition," he says, "at least is a healthy competition, in that it's going at the same prices."*

*Another issue is the Board's control of government sponsored films. While the independents speak highly of the efforts that Walford (Wally) Hewitson of the Sponsored Programme Division has made to improve relations between the two sectors on this issue, many of them also call for legislation – such as deletion of clauses 9 and 11 from the National Film Act – to further decrease the NFB monopoly. As Graeme Fraser of Crawleys points out, the film medium could be sold much more widely to government departments if the Board didn't stand in the way.*

*The immediate concern of most producers, however, is the CBC, whose \$500-million budget dwarfs the Film Board's budget under \$50-million.*

*The independents – through the revitalized Canadian Film and Television Association increasingly acting as one voice that speaks for the entire industry – are pushing for a vastly improved deal for the taxpayer by requiring the CBC to buy instead of make their own productions – and they're making their point with a sales presentation in the form of a unique film directed at senior decision-makers in Ottawa.*

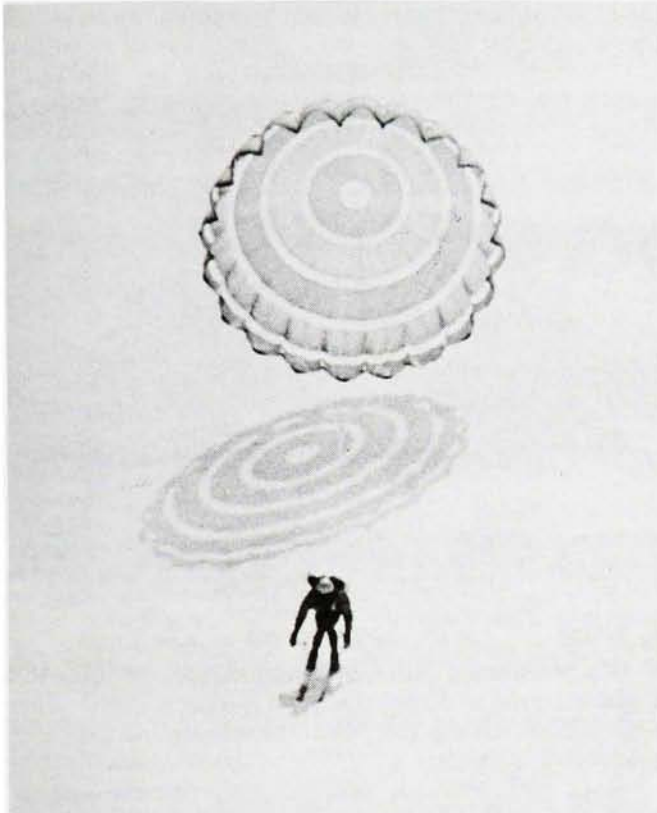
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*Jaan Pill is a free-lance writer and artist who lives in Toronto.*

**Jaan Pill**

**Crawley Films Limited** was founded by Frank Radford ('Budge') Crawley in Ottawa in 1939.

Crawley Films has now made over 2500 films including sponsored films for just about everybody and also features as well as 700 commercials and promos. And it has won over 200 national and world awards including an Oscar (1976) for **The Man Who Skied Down Everest**.



The parachute opens in Crawley's **The Man Who Skied Down Everest**

Also, Crawley Films is a member of 'IQ' – International Quorum of Motion Picture Producers – an association of major international producers, who use each others' services when producing outside their home countries. Crawley's vice president Graeme Fraser is an IQ past president.

Of CBC, Crawley notes that "They're subsidized 500 million dollars a year. Nobody knows how it's really deployed. They're just absolutely hagridden with overhead." The solution, he says, would be to cut the budget in half. "The programs would be better. They've got such an overhead of useless people. That's their trouble. It's empire building like you wouldn't believe."

**Chetwynd Films Limited** was founded in 1950 by Arthur Chetwynd, who till then had been teaching physical and health education at the University of Toronto.

The company's first productions were coaching, educational and Red Cross films, followed by several years of childrens' shows for CBC.

Chetwynd Films made football films for Big Four football teams until 10 years ago, has made Grey Cup films since 1947, and films for the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede since 1952.

Sports films make up a third of the business. Also accident prevention, medical films and lots of travel films are



photo: Chetwynd Films

Grand Prix Canada 1967: Robert Brooks CSC, at that time Chetwynd Film's Photography Director (and now President of Robert Brooks Associates) gives instructions to Jack Brabham on the operation of Chetwynd's helmet camera.

produced. Over 3000 films all told to date have been made.

Chetwynd stresses that the non-theatrical business is "a communications business, pure and simple" – which explains, for example, why the company is involved with things like the Canadian Schenley football awards, where it stages a two-hour show combining film, live music and speeches.

And finally Chetwynd Films is very much a family company – employing Arthur Chetwynd, his wife Marjory and son Robin (who's now the owner and president).

**Westminster Films Limited** has been in business since 1958 and has made strictly sponsored drama, industrial and documentary films. "Name it, we've done it," says production coordinator Margaret Beadle.

It has also produced slides and multi-screen productions, such as the 6 1/2 hour communications seminar show for Bell Canada.

Don Haldane and Lee Gordon are the two owners. Haldane is currently co-ordinating the Discovery Train (for the NFB), a special train sponsored by the National Museums and comprised of ten museum cars depicting scenes from Canadian history that will travel across Canada for the next five years.

Haldane is Westminster's president. Lee Gordon, who both directs and produces, serves as executive vice-president. Also Keith Harley does model animation and special effects.

Westminster has six permanent staff members plus freelance technicians and cameramen. It has always been a medium-sized film house. Gordon and Haldane prefer its size to that of an expanding company, as it allows them to be personally involved with each project.

**Quinn Laboratories Limited** was started in 1968 by Findlay Quinn who had his start in 1946 when he joined the Film Board. In the war he served as an RCAF squadron gunnery officer who used films for training and as a result became interested in filmmaking.

In 1957 he left the Board to run Transworld Film Labs in Montreal.

Around this time it happened that Bob Crone, a producer, director, cameraman, soundman in Toronto, was regularly sending work to Montreal. Crone decided to form a service

unit and contacted Quinn for the lab and Len Green for sound division. The result was Film House.

Some years later, both Quinn and Green left, and Quinn started Quinn Labs. (Green now runs the NFB sound division.)



Findlay J. Quinn

The sound division of Quinn Labs – Mirrophonic Sound – was started in 1974. Quinn is president of Canadian Film and Television Association and has had a major role in its revitalization. (He credits his predecessors Harold Eady and Gunter Henning for getting the ball rolling.)

I asked Quinn for an estimate on annual dollar volume for the industry. He put it at \$100 million for all the projects that CFTA covers. He says that features are about 25 percent of dollar volume. Estimates from other sources were in the same range.

*During the preparation of this issue of Cinema Canada, Quinn Labs were sold to Film House. We chose not to edit the copy but to let it stand, a tribute to Finn Quinn and his contribution to the industry. Ed.*

#### KEG Productions Limited

KEG, started in 1964, is named after the three principal shareholders – G.S. Kedey, Ralph Ellis and Dan Gibson.

KEG's TV wildlife series – **Audubon Wildlife Theater** – has never been off the air since 1969. The series, which has been shown in about 40 countries, was financed through presales based on pilots.

KEG also produced **Wildlife Cinema**, another wildlife series for TV, along with **To The Wild Country** – and a feature film, **Wings of the Wilderness**.

Ralph Ellis serves as KEG's executive producer. Like Arthur Chetwynd and Findlay Quinn at the end of World War II, he went directly from RCAF into the film business. And like Quinn, he began with the Film Board. He stayed on for

8 1/2 years, ending up in New York as the Board's United States sales distribution manager.

After leaving NFB he founded Freemantle of Canada Limited, an international distribution company in Toronto, whose holdings he sold 7 years later.

Right now KEG is relatively dormant. In 1968 Ellis had formed a production company, Manitou Productions Limited, for **Adventures in Rainbow Country**, a dramatic series for children. He presold the series in England, Australia and Canada on a presentation basis to get the money to produce it.



Dan Gibson with his nature family in KEG Productions' feature film **Wings in the Wilderness**

Ellis reactivating Manitou to co-produce with CBC **Wild Canada**, a series of 13 hour-long TV specials to run for a four year period, starring John and Janet Foster, Dan Gibson's producer on the series.

Along with Manitou, Ellis has a distribution company, Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises Limited, that brings TV series such as **Upstairs, Downstairs** into Canada.

**International Cinemedia Center Limited** began in Montreal in 1969 when Joseph Koenig, John Kemeny and George Kaczender left the National Film Board.

Koenig says that before he joined the Board in the early '50s, he was a reporter for some trade papers in Montreal. He began as a writer for NFB educational film strips, then moved to educational films.

Looking back, he's pleased he had to make a living on the outside before he went to work for the Board.

"A lot of people didn't and still don't have that experience and it's a serious – a very serious – problem."

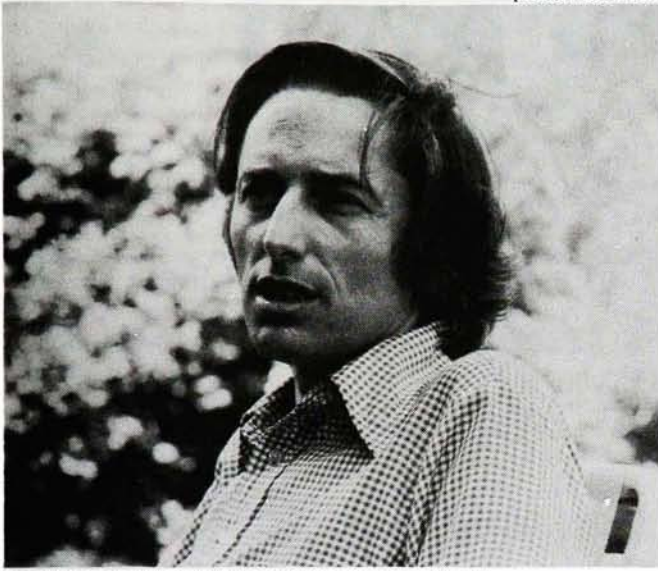
At the Board, Koenig directed films like **Origins of Weather** and **Climates of North America**, both of which gained widespread popularity.

Among the films he produced were **Cosmic Zoom** and **Imperial Sunset**.

International Cinemedia has made sponsored films as well as features including **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** and **White Line Fever** (a successful movie "about truckers for Columbia in which "All the good guys have funny names and don't wear ties and all the bad guys wear ties, speak good English and have paintings on their walls.")

Koenig stresses that his company's first job is to sell communication. For example much of its educational work involves 35 mm film strips. "We've found it's very important," Koenig says, "because the market for 16mm films... has simply dried up."

photo: Jaan Pill



Joseph Koenig's first job is to "sell communications"

They've moved into the print (as in paper and ink) medium too. "We've got to provide communication stuff. We can't just be movie makers. We find that's not what people want to buy. They want to buy a service."

The company moved its head office to Toronto in 1977. Kemeny, who is its president, is in Los Angeles concentrating on features.

**Insight Productions** was launched by John Watson and Pen Densham in 1970 with a series of fillers for CBC.

They've recently produced several TV specials including *Toller*, *World of Wizards* and *Stallone, The Million-to-One Shot*.



John Watson, Malcolm Bricklin and Pen Densham during an Insight shoot

The latter film resulted from Densham's stint as 'intern' to Norman Jewison in Hollywood on *F.I.S.T.*, the feature starring Sylvester Stallone.

Insight divided the past year between Toronto and Hollywood — where Universal hired it to do a documentary on Stallone's new feature, *Paradise Alley*. Instead of using interviews with actors, Insight wrote lines which the characters deliver as if they were actually stepping out of the film for a moment to talk to the audience.

Impressed with the results, Universal then hired the company to do the feature's product reel and trailers.

Insight finds such projects "an ideal opportunity to discover the inner workings of a successful major films corporation."

Recently, Insight cut back on staff and production in Toronto — to ensure that they stay personally involved with each film instead of becoming a film factory. As well, they want to concentrate on projects pointed toward international-sale TV specials and features.

Concerning the National Film Board, Densham says that independents working for them are learning to please producers, when they really should be out learning to please audiences.

**Nelvana Limited** was formed in 1971; the principals are Patrick Loubert, Clive Smith and Michael Hirsch.

As result of the success of its animated TV special *A Cosmic Christmas*, Nelvana is now moving along with *The Devil and Daniel Mouse*, which will run on CBC and Radio-Canada and on the same American stations that carried *Cosmic*.



Weez Weezel wields a gavel while Beezlebub promotes rock 'n roll in Nelvana's new TV special, *The Devil and Daniel Mouse*

As well, George Lucas has selected Nelvana to do the first animation of several *Star War* characters — 10 minutes of animation for a 90-minute TV special produced in Los Angeles.

And it has received a script-development grant from CFDC for an animated feature.

Meanwhile Nelvana continues with live-action industrial and educational films and a series of half-hour family entertainment documentaries.

# up and coming

Patricia Thompson chatted with a few of the people in the newer film companies in Toronto, and gives us a glimpse of their goings-on.

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by Patricia Thompson



Paul Saltzman aboard ship in Zanzibar shooting *Journey From Zanzibar* for the "Spread Your Wings" Series

*Let's muse for a moment on the astronomical expense of producing a 35mm feature film skyrocketing cinema admission prices, brought about by escalating costs of wages, equipment, upkeep, repairs – not to mention pricey popcorn and pop and distributors with outrageously greedy demands. One is tempted to predict a new "trend" towards the more economical 16mm film being used within the commercial framework.*

*Canada has an enviable world reputation for 16mm documentaries, via Grierson and the National Film Board. Young filmmakers, eyes sparkle with dreams of feature films cannot, these days, really hope to 'practise' on 35mm.*

*Speaking as a veteran film society organizer and a member of the trio who started the Ontario Film Institute and Theatre, good 16mm facilities, intelligently used, can rate with 35mm in the smaller, intimate cinema. At the Ontario Film Theatre in the Science Centre, Toronto, I often turn and check the booth to find out if the superb image on the screen is 35mm or 16mm.*

*The following small sampling of 16mm filmmakers, alive and well in Toronto, serves to display them – gutsy, feisty, professional – lots of energetic survivors, all more than ready to take up a challenge.*

Patricia Thompson

Bill Dunn of **Artistic Productions** — interviewed in his coach house studio/residence — had an orange visor clamped to his brow proclaiming “Nude Florida Pageant.” Don’t be fooled — he’s not in the porn business!

His partner is Tom Taylor, formerly an illustrator, and their company has been around for eight years. Bill started in advertising and photography, and continues to maintain a business association and *rapport* with clients from those days.

Artistic Productions makes sponsored films. Recent ones were for Hertz, Sangamo and Famous Players: also commercials shot in 16mm (contrary to the usual practice around town) which are edited on film and released on two-inch tape only.

“We always have script approval and we are not in any film unless we own part of it,” says Bill firmly.

For the past month or so, success seems to be coming at them: a network sale to CBC for one telecast of **Normandy Dream** on November 11 this year, a distributor in Munich, for European deals, who has a contact in Canada; and a



Scene from a Schwarzkopf commercial, *La Méthode*, produced by Artistic Productions

separate approach to the BBC any minute now. “We’ve got 2 1/2 hours of programing altogether — including **Street Music** and **The Game**... all the films we’ve made have always sold in Canada, sometimes to both the English and French TV networks, plus print sales.”

**Normandy Dream** is the first of a mini-series of war stories relating to the *individual* rather than the history. The second is about a Spitfire pilot, is pre-produced, and at the ‘talking to investors’ stage. They’ve just finished a 90-minute, 16mm feature, in color, with Burg Productions and Tony Kramreither, working title *Nude World*.

Bill Dunn joined associations “when I was young” for education purposes, but is convinced that, to be any good, you have to break away from the basics and do what *you* want to do. “I’m still a member of CSC (Canadian Society of Cinematographers) where I meet people in my own craft.”

He is also convinced that 16mm filmmakers shouldn’t be tame! “I had to call Al Johnson in Ottawa to get the CBC contract for **Normandy Dream**. You have to do anything — talk back, go over people’s heads.”

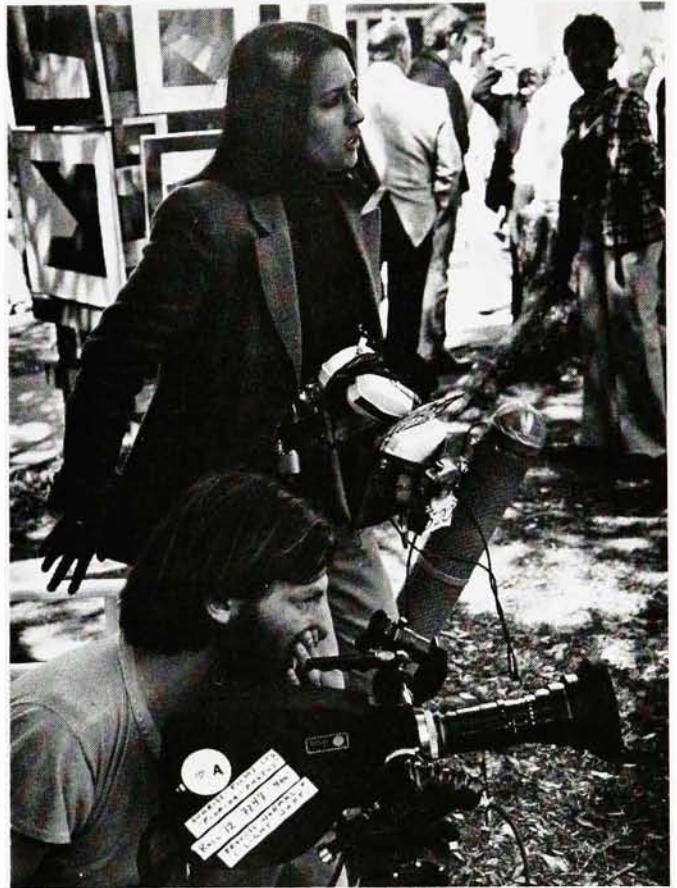
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**Sunrise Films** makes people-oriented documentaries. A prime example is **At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch**,

winner of a Canadian Film Award in 1975 and a Red Ribbon at the American Film Festival. “We’ve never made a sponsored film, and we don’t want to,” says Deepa Saltzman, who directs, writes, works on sound — and is now learning camera.

The company’s films are made by three, or so, people. A small working group is best for them. Everyone knows his/her job and does it without interference from the others. After five years in business, Deepa says with pride that documentaries such as **What’s the Weather Like Up There?**, **To Be a Clown** and **Indira Gandhi: State of Power**, sell to TV around the world, and in the educational print market. With two distributors in the U.S., one handling print sales and the other TV rights, the company is busy all the time and “moderately successful.”

In Canada, the company projects are offered to and discussed with CBC, and usually accepted. Distribution and sales here are handled by Viking Films.



Paul and Deepa Saltzman on location in Florida to shoot the **Spread Your Wings** Series

Sunrise’s big undertaking is a series of 13 films for children in the 10-16 age group, and nine are already completed. Filmed all over the world, these docu-dramas show a child learning a craft and a tradition, and relating to friends, family life and the instructor, with narration by a child. These CBC co-productions, to be shown on the English and French networks, cover countries and crafts from Chartres, France (stained glass), Germany, (violin making), Peru (gourd carving) and to India (carpet making).



The Sunrise group is now filming in South East Asia — Japan, Bali, Singapore, Thailand. Be a 16mm filmmaker and cover the world!

To talk to Cabbageroll Productions is to meet with Clay Borris, his partner John Phillips, and *entourage* — Clay's aunt, Pauline Maltais, and *protégé* Doris — all crammed around a tiny table in a downtown Greek sidewalk café on an extremely warm day.

Clay Borris and John Phillips have been in business since 1969 and, as John puts it, "I would say we are not financially successful — but artistically, yes."



John Phillips mans the camera while Clay and Julia Borris handle the sound equipment during the shoot of *One Hand Clapping*

The company's 'take notice' film is *Rose's House*, a study of, and tribute to, Clay's redoubtable mother, and his relatives — "people tell me I'm obsessed with my family." It was sold outright for \$30,000 to the National Film Board, who furnished post production. But, as Clay says, "The film cost \$34,000 to make, including money from The Canada Council, and no one got paid for acting, so it was about an \$80,000/\$90,000 film really."

Clay and John spent two years (1975-77) at Browndale, a treatment centre for emotionally disturbed children. With Clay directing and John as cameraman (their favorite mode of working) they travelled around Ontario to about 60 houses where up to five children are housed in small "treatment" groups, and made eight half-hour training and publicity films for the organization.

"The Odd Couple," as Clay insists they are known, have written a feature film script with Steve Klys — *Gift of Gab*. It's in the hands of Don Haig at Film Arts, for consideration by

Allan King when he has a reading space. Planned as a 16mm feature in color, the terrible twins are thinking positively about starting a shooting by the end of the year.

According to David Springbett's wife and partner, Heather MacAndrew, Asterisk Film & Videotape Productions is a company specializing in international development themes — Third World countries and foreign aid, UNICEF, OXFAM, developing countries and developing ideas.

This specific interest has its roots in Bolivia in 1973, where David crewed on a BBC/OXFAM production. It led to India in 1974 with the same combination, and then to work with OXFAM in the U.S. for a couple of years.

David then raised the money, produced and directed *Guatemala Camp Vivo* around Christmas 1976. It was aired on CBC's *Man Alive* during 1977.

All a far cry from David's start with *And No Birds Sing*, made at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in 1968. Of fond memory, the film trickled gently around the film society circuit, and aroused a minor flurry of publicity and interest.

The latest twist in the Springbett career came a few weeks ago when the National Film Board offered him a one-year contract as Regional Producer, Ontario Region — formerly Beryl Fox's *niche*.

Heather MacAndrew Springbett is continuing to run Asterisk, and the company has several proposals lodged with various levels of government. "We'll just see what happens during the year of David's contract."

Gunter Oldenburg's company, Complete Film Services, specializes in commercials. About 90 percent, in fact, plus a few industrial films designed to show off clients' products and businesses.

Only about 25 percent of the shooting is in 16mm, so perhaps Gunter doesn't strictly fit in here, but he's been the CFTA representative on the Committee of the Canadian Film Awards for 1977 and 1978. A dedicated member of the Judging Group in 1977, his expertise (and staying power!) was of great value in the craft judging, where the majority of entries are on 16mm.

In business for seven years, with four employees (including himself), plus free lancers when needed, Gunter assesses his venture as "medium-stable" since its start.

Contacts are really important. Business is nearly all through Canadian agencies, with about 15 percent in the U.S. We use Canadian talent mostly — except perhaps for a special spokesman identified with a brand or trade name. However, sometimes a client fixes on a particular 'face' which may be U.S."

Recently, in a small breathing space between assignments, Gunter Oldenburg announced an agreement between Complete Film Services and a British company, Cinema of The Seventies. His company will supply facilities and assistance with contractual negotiations with Canadian union artists, for not less than three features to be announced soon. Cinema of The Seventies is headed by Roy Millichip, an independent producer/writer whose feature credits include producer and co-producer respectively of *I Was Happy Here* and *Smashing Time*.