

# TORONTO FILMMAKERS' CO-OP

## Toronto Film Movement

*Jerry McNabb*

*"What we learned was that if you're going to get attention you've got to get together and make a row... Whether you're a movement or not, at least pretend to be one."*

*Lindsay Anderson, 1969*

During my formative years, I was addicted to baseball and movies. So naturally a baseball movie I saw at that age should be forever burned into my memory. But it isn't.

The film starred someone like Dan Daily and it was about a big orange cat that inherited a baseball team. The cat's name was Rhubarb and anyone who rubbed her had good luck in the game. You know, 4 for 4, seven RBI's and maybe pitch a 2-hitter.

At first the players refused to have anything to do with their owner, a kind of feline Jack Kent Cooke. No doubt they felt their manhood threatened, owned by a cat who once belonged to an eccentric old lady. But they discovered, quite by accident, that petting the cat brought them good luck, so they eventually rallied round their owner/mascot and probably went on to win the world series. I can remember the moral lessons but not the hard facts.

What, you are probably asking, does any of this have to do with the Toronto Film Movement? A movement, incidentally, that does not exist. Time to retreat and start at another point.

Filmmaking in Toronto is competitive, to say the least, and cutthroat, to say the most. It is also, with some rare and beautiful exceptions, generally bad. There are a number of problems, most notably the American stranglehold on distribution and exhibition. Other complaints range from insufficient money to bad scripts. But dwelling on those problems is a negative approach and becomes a rationalization for not going into production. Toronto lacks an *esprit de corps* with regards to film that, dare I say it, prevails in Quebec.

The Film-makers Co-Op is an attempt to get Toronto's Film community together and to this end we have had some success. But we are limited by funds, which accordingly limits our staff and our potential.

On Monday night, the 5th of February, there will be a membership meeting of the Co-Op which we hope will get into the problems and possible solutions of Toronto film production. The major point of contention seems to be whether to Co-Op should become a producer per se rather than the service function it now fulfills.

Another point for discussion is whether to add staff, and accordingly, change the organizational structure so the staff will have more power to make long-range decisions.

If these changes are affected, it would mean a major shift in priorities for the organization. But we are determined to continue our present programs of lobbying and helping the independent filmmakers who are working on shoestring budgets.

There are many people who doubt that Toronto's filmmakers can ever work together, or cooperatively. But maybe we can pretend and nobody be the wiser. ●

**FLASH! Special co-op feature film script-writing contest!**

**By mail: 341 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1W8**

**By phone: (416) 922-5706**



*The photographer, Tom Urquhart*

Photo: Raphael Bendahan



*Patrick Lee in the Co-op's editing room.*

Photo: Tom Urquhart

*Sandra Gathercole and Jerry McNabb*



Photo: Tom Urquhart

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